coolings derived special interest from the fact that this was the hundredth anniversary of the Association, its first meeting having been at Kettering in 1765. At half-past two o'clock on the Tuesday the business of the Provident Society was transacted; and at six o'clock, after prayer by the Rev. W. Kitchen, of Ringstead, the Circular Letter was read by the Rev. T. T. Gough, of Clipstone. It embraces a summary of the history of the Association from its commencement, and many faithful counsels and wise suggestions as to the spirit in which its meetings should be conducted, and the manner in which its interest and usefulness might be increased. As the result of this letter, a committee was appointed to consider how far it might be desirable to modify the annual services and general action of the Association. On the Wednesday, after the early prayer-meeting, the ministers and messengers assembled at nine o'clock to administer the Association Fund. About £70 was distributed among the more necessitous of the churches. The morning service, at half-past ten, was opened by the Rev. F. Timmis, of Olney; and the Revs. — Ewin, of Bythorn, and T. T. Gough, preached; the former from 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, and the latter from I Cor. xv. 18. The Rev. J. Mursell, of Kettering, offered the concluding prayer. In the afternoon, after reading and prayer by the Rev. W. H. King, of Thrapston, the letters from the various churches were read. The reports were more cheering than those of last year; nearly twice as many have been added to the churches. The centenary sermon was preached in the evening by the Rev. J. T. Brown, from Zech. i. 5. The discourse, which was one of singular power and pathos, held captive the attention of a crowded congregation during its delivery, and at their closing meeting the ministers and messengers unanimously requested its publication. The introductory devotions at this service were conducted by the Rev. H. Capen, of Bugbrook, and those at the conclusion by the Rev. J. F. Potter, B.A. (Independent), of Wellingborough. The Rev. S. Williams, of Hackleton, was the moderator for the year. The meetings were, as usual, very numerously attended; and the heartiest hospitality was shown by the friends at Rushden and their pastor, the Rev. R. Bradfield. The interest of the Association keeps up without flagging; and it starts on its second century of life with every prospect, under the blessing of God, of increasing vigour and usefulness. The next meeting is to be held at Kettering.

Lancashire and Cheshire Association.—The twenty-eighth anniversary of this Association was held on the 7th and 8th of June, at Grange Lane Chapel, Birkenhead. On the Wednesday morning, a public prayer-meeting was held, under the presidency of the Rev. A. M. Stalker, of Southport. At the afternoon meeting, the Rev. F. Bugby reported the statistics of the churches, from which it appeared that the gain, during the past year, had been very small. The Rev. C. M. Birrell, as moderator, then addressed the ministers and messengers, regarding them under the several aspects of Churchmen, Congregationalists, and Christians. The address was listened to with the deepest attention, and an earnest desire was expressed for its publication. In the evening, the annual meeting of the County Home Mission was held, G. T. Kemp, Esq., of Rochdale, in the chair. Mr. W. Allison, one of the secretaries, read the report, and Mr. A. Brown, the treasurer, made the financial statement. The meeting was then addressed by the Revs. James Owen, of Liverpool; P. P. Rowe, of Oldham; A. Mursell, of Manchester; and W. H. Wylie, of Accrington. On Thursday morning, at half-past six o'clock, a prayer-meeting was held, at which the Rev. R. Brown, of Padiham, presided. At half-past ten o'clock, the Rev. E. C. Pike, B.A., of Rochdale, preached the Association sermon, from Ephesians iii. 8; his subject being, "The Message of the Gospel overwhelming the messenger with a sense of his own insignificance." After the sermon, the Rev. S. G. Green, B.A., president of Rawdon College, read the Circular Letter which he had prepared, on "Tests for Church-membership." In the afternoon, the annual business-meeting was held. The Rev. F. Bugby having intimated his determination not to hold the office of secretary any longer, received the hearty thanks of the Association for his six years' services, and the Rev. S. H. Booth, of Birkenhead, was appointed his successor. The Rev. S. G. Green's Circular Letter was adopted, and ordered to be printed. A resolution was unanimously passed, commending the Freedmen's Aid Society to the liberality of the associated churches. In the evening, the Rev. A. McLaren, B.A., preached from Isaiah lxii. 1, 6, and 7, and the moderator concluded the services of the Association with prayer and the benediction.

Shropshire Association.—The annual meetings of this Association were held at Pontesbury, on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 6th and 7th of June. At half-past

eleven a.m., on Tuesday, the ministers and messengers of the various churches assembled in the chapel, when an hour was devoted to earnest prayer for the increasing prosperity of the churches, and for the divine blessing to rest upon the future meetings and consultations of the brethren. In the afternoon the usual intelligence concerning the state of the churches was received, from which it was evident that a spirit of union and harmony very generally prevailed among them; while the increase, though small, was larger than that of the preceding year. Baptists in Shropshire appear to be surrounded with peculiar difficulties; their principles make but comparatively slow progress; most of the towns in the county are small, and are to a large extent under the sway of Church and Tory patronage and influence. The brethren, however, seemed fully conscious of the disadvantages which they have to confront, and there was manifest resolution to prove in their several spheres of labour equal to the necessities of their position. The preachers on the occasion were Messrs. Alford, of Welchpool; Keen, of Bridgenorth; Yeadon, of Whitchurch; How, of Shrewsbury; and Judson, of Wellington. A numerous committee was appointed, with Mr. Smith, of Pontesbury, as acting secretary, for the purpose of personally collecting funds for Home Mission work in the county. The claims of the Baptist Union were urged upon the assembly, and a resolution was passed recommending each church to send an annual contribution to its funds. The Circular Letter, written by Mr. How, was on "The Duty of the Churches in Reference to the Association," and was adopted. The secretary, the Rev. J. Judson, was afterwards requested to prepare a paper for next year, on "The Past and Present Condition of Baptists in the County." At the meetings for business, the deliberations were of a useful and practical character; there was a good attendance at the public services, and the congregations were deeply attentive.

Suffolk and Norfolk Home Missionary Union.—The annual meetings of this Society were held this year at Diss, on June 8th. The Society originated a few years ago, for the purpose of extending the cause of Christ in the two counties through Home Missionary operations, by introducing the Gospel into necessitous places, and assisting to maintain the word of life in them. It has been the means of building four new chapels, and assists in supporting the regular preaching of the Gospel in seven principal stations, and, in connexion with these, sixteen village stations are supplied with the means of grace. Seven Sunday schools have been established, and conducted with considerable efficiency. In these Home Mission churches there are three hundred and sixty-one members in church fellowship, forty-two of whom were baptized during the year. There are six hundred and thirty-one Sabbath scholars, and seventy-seven teachers. Some twenty churches of the same faith and order met at Diss to further the objects of the mission. In the morning a private meeting was held for the transaction of business. In the afternoon a public meeting took place for reading the reports from the associated churches, mingled with devotional services of singing and prayer by the various ministers. The reports were not, on the whole, quite so favourable as on former occasions, though from some of the churches they were very encouraging, and indicated great prosperity. In the evening a public meeting, very fully attended, was held, when the Rev. G. Cobb, of Framsden, delivered an energetic and searching address on "Personal Religion;" the Rev. G. W. Oldring, of Thetford, on "The Obligations of Christians to Diffuse it," which was heard with great interest; and the Rev. C. Elven, of Bury, on "The Blessedness of its Consummation," which made most who were present to desire that blessedness. Thus ended a series of services seldom surpassed for interest and profit. Dinner and tea were provided in the school-room, and attended by a large concourse of friends. The collections and subscriptions from Diss for Home Mission purposes were £18.

North-Western Association.—The annual meetings of this Association were held at Waterbarn, near Bacup, Lancashire, on the 7th and 8th of June. On Wednesday, June 7th, at three p.m., the Rev. J. Howe was chosen moderator. The letters from the churches—fourteen in number—reported an increase of 121, and a decrease of 100, the clear increase being twenty-one. The Rev. H. Hall, of Bacup, read the Circular Letter, on "The Duty of Believers to Give, according to their Ability, to the Cause of Christ." In the evening, after reading and prayer by the Rev. W. H. Knight, of Bury, the Association sermon was preached by the Rev. T. Durant, of Liverpool, from 2 Timothy iv. 6–8. A collection was made at the close in aid of the Association Fund. On Thursday, June 8th, an early prayer-meeting was

held, which was well attended, and was felt to be a time of refreshing. The Rev. J. Smith presided, and gave a short address on "Christian Joy." At ten o'clock a public meeting took place, the moderator in the chair, who presented a report on the state of the churches as gathered from the letters and statistics. Addresses on various practical topics were delivered by the Revs. J. Harvey, T. Dawson, J. G. Hall, and Mr. R. Fish. In the afternoon the ministers and messengers met for the transaction of business. The Circular Letter, read by the Rev. H. Hall, was cordially adopted, and a resolution appended expressing regret in the prospect of our brother's removal from Bacup, on account of ill health. Resolutions were also passed expressive of indignation at the assassination of the late President Lincoln, and sympathy with the American people; and recommending the Freedmen's Aid Society to the support of the churches. In the evening, after devotional exercises by the Rev. H. Hall, the Rev. T. Vasey, of Lurub, preached from Psalm cxxii. 6. The Rev. J. Howe then invited the congregation to join in singing "The Christian's Farewell," and concluded the deeply interesting services of the Association by prayer and the benediction.

YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION.—The annual services of the Yorkshire Association were held on the 6th, 7th, and 8th of June, at Pellon Lane Chapel, Halifax. At the first sitting, the Rev. Thos. Michael, pastor of the church at Pellon Lane, was appointed moderator, and various committees formed to arrange the business of the Association. An excellent paper was read on the evening of the 6th by the Rev. Thomas Pottenger, on "Pastoral Visitation;" after which an earnest and profitable discussion was conducted relating to the subject of the paper. The early prayer-meetings at 6.30 a.m. were seasons of much and hallowed enjoyment. The Circular Letter, prepared by the Rev. Henry Dowson, on "Domestic Piety Essential to the Prosperity of our Churches and the Propagation of our Principles," was warmly approved, and will speedily be printed for circulation. The reports from the churches are more favourable than they have been for several years. During the year, 600 persons have been added to the churches by baptism. The clear increase for the year, after deducting deaths (of which there have been a more than usual number) and other causes of decrease, is 400. The public meeting of the Yorkshire Itinerant Society was held on the evening of the 7th,—Thomas Aked, Esq., in the chair,—and was addressed by the Revs. Dr. Acworth, W. Skae, M.A., S. Green, and J. P. Campbell. Excellent sermons were preached on the 7th and 8th by the Revs. D. Crumpton, W. E. Archer, and A. Mursell. The attendance at these services was exceedingly good from the beginning to the close, and the provision made by the friends at Halifax ample and generous. The meetings next year are to be held at Sutton-in-Craven.

HERTS AND BEDS ASSOCIATION.—The annual meetings in connexion with this Association were held in Wellington Street Chapel, Luton, on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 6th and 7th of June. The Rev. D. Ashbery, the minister of the place, presided. On Tuesday morning the ministers and messengers met for business. In the evening, and at seven o'clock the next morning, prayer-meetings were held. On the second day, at eleven o'clock, the annual sermon was preached by the Rev. C. Bailhache, of Islington. In the afternoon a public meeting was held, when the letters from the various churches were read. As the statistics were very incomplete, it was not possible to determine the increase in the churches collectively during the year. The reports were of a varied character. Resolutions of sympathy were passed, during the meetings of the Association, with the widow of the late beloved Rev. W. Upton, of St. Albans; with the Rev. H. C. Leonard, M.A., who, to the deep regret and sorrow of all the brethren, was compelled by continued ill-health to resign the secretaryship of the Association; and with the Freedmen's Aid Society. It was also resolved to appoint a committee to ascertain what could be done in the district by the Association in the way of Home Mission work, and that next year's Circular Letter be on this subject—to be written by the Rev. T. Hands. The officers were appointed for the year as follows:—Secretary, the Rev. T. Hands; treasurer, J. Waller, Esq.; preacher, the Rev. H. Ashbery, or, in case of failure, the Rev. T. R. Stevenson. The next Association is to be held at Hemel Hempstead. The meetings were tolerably well attended, and felt to be both interesting and profitable.

NORTHERN ASSOCIATION.—The annual services of the Northern Baptist Association were held on June the 5th and 6th, at South Shields. The sermons were preached by the Revs. T. H. Pattison, of Newcastle, and G. V. Barker, of Sunderland; and the Circular Letter, on "The

Importance and Best Method of Seeking the Conversion of the Young People in our Congregations, especially such as are the Children of Pious Parents," was read by the Rev. W. Fawcett, of Crosby Garrett. Resolutions were adopted at the business meeting appointing delegates to the autumnal meeting of the Baptist Union; commending the effort on the part of the Union to provide education for ministers' children; expressing satisfaction at the close of the war in America; urging the churches to make annual collections for the British and Irish Baptist Home Mission; and protesting against all endowments of religion by the State. On the Tuesday evening, the annual public meeting of the Baptist Home Missionary Society was held. The chair was filled by R. Callender, Esq. The Rev. W. Walters, as secretary, presented the report; and the meeting was addressed by the Revs. R. Menzies, of Broomley; T. W. Grant, late of Darlington; E. Edwards, of Hartlepool; and J. H. Gordon, of Darlington. All the services were well attended, and proved very pleasant and profitable. The next Session is to be held at Hartlepool.

LEICESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION. — On Tuesday, 6th June, the annual meeting of the Leicestershire Association was held at Monk's Kirby; the Rev. John W. Moore, the pastor of the place, moderator. A clear increase of fifty-six members was reported in the thirteen churches of the Association. It was also reported that the old meeting-house at Foxton had been taken down, and a new chapel erected in accordance with the ecclesiastical aspirations of the age. Inquiry was made of the representatives of each church whether their meeting-house was duly registered. The British and Irish Home Mission and the Baptist Union were commended to the practical sympathy of the churches. The next year's meeting to be held at Arnsby, on Whit-Tuesday; the preacher, Rev. J. P. Mursell, of Leicester. In the afternoon, the Rev. W. Bull, B.A., of Sutton-in-the-Elms, read a concise and very interesting history of the rise and progress of the churches of the Association, prepared at the desire of last year's meeting, which he was requested to publish. In the evening, the Rev. Thomas Rhys Evans, of Countesthorpe, preached an excellent sermon from 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

Intelligence.

DOMESTIC.

ACCRINGTON. — Interesting services in connexion with the recognition of the Rev. W. H. Wylie as pastor of the Baptist church, Blackburn Road Chapel, Accrington, were held on Thursday, June 15th. After a luncheon in the new school-room, at half-past twelve, Mr. Barlow, the deacon, presiding, fraternal greetings and very kindly references to Mr. Wylie's past career and labours were made by the Revs. G. B. Thomas, of Leeds; James Martin, B.A., of Nottingham; P. P. Rowe, M.A., of Oldham; and A. M. Stalker, of Stockport. At two p.m. a service was held in the chapel, when the Rev. G. B. Thomas addressed the church on "The Return a faithful pastor's Work justly deserves from the Church," which was listened to with delight and profit. This was followed by a valuable discourse to the pastor on "The Perfecting of the Saints for the Work of their Ministry." The Revs. H. Hall, of Bacup; P. Prout, of Hallingden; R. Brown, of Padiham; A. M. Stalker, of Southport; —. Tebb (Methodist Free Church); J. Howe, of Waterbarn; W. Anson, of Cloughfold; and W. Jackson, of Church, took part in the devotional exercises. After tea, at which upwards of 300 were present, a public meeting was held in the large school-room, which was well filled, the pastor being in the chair. When a hymn had been sung, and prayer offered by the Rev. J. Smith, of Bacup, the chairman called upon Mr. Marshall, one of the deacons, who explained the steps taken to secure the services of Mr. Wylie, which appeared to afford great satisfaction to the audience. After the chairman had acknowledged the kind remarks respecting him by various brethren, the meeting was addressed by the Revs. P. P. Rowe, of Oldham, on "The Tests of successful Christian work;" J. Whitley, of Salford, on "Preaching;" R. Evans, of Burnley, on "Their former Pastors;" G. Hester, of Sheffield, on "Co-operation in Christian work necessary to the Conversion of the World;" E. C. Pike, of Rochdale, on "Worldliness in Christian professors a

Hindrance to mission work." The Rev. E. Lewis (Independent), and Mr. Lewis (Primitive), also offered a few words of welcome and congratulation to pastor and people.

WELLINGTON, SOMERSET.—On Friday, May 30th, the commodious school and class-rooms built for the Sunday school in connexion with the Baptist church, Wellington, were publicly opened. In the afternoon a capital sermon was preached by the Rev. N. Haycroft, M.A., of Bristol. At five o'clock, the large room and infant class-room were crowded by a numerous company assembled to tea. At half-past six, a public meeting was held in the chapel. In the lamented absence, through illness, of Thomas Thompson, Esq., of Prior-park, Bath, the chair was taken by Mr. W. Horsey. Mr. Haddon, the treasurer of the school building fund, read a statement of accounts, from which it appeared that the cost of the land, builders' contract, gas-fittings, and furniture, amounted to £1,159 17s. 5d. The subscriptions paid in and promises made up to the morning of opening were £636 5s. 7d., leaving a balance of £523 11s. 10d. due on the building. An appeal was then made to the friends by the Rev. G. Humphreys, the pastor, for additional subscriptions towards making up this sum. The appeal was promptly and liberally responded to, the chairman taking the lead by doubling his subscription. Very many friends followed, and at the close it was stated that the whole proceeds of the day, including collections, profit on tea-meeting, amount received by the ladies for useful and ornamental work sold, and promises, would reduce the debt to £280. Very excellent speeches were delivered during the evening by the chairman; the Rev. E. Edwards, of Chard; E. Webb, of Tiverton; H. B. Cowell, B.A., of Taunton; J. Price, and S. Mann, of Exeter; J. Morris (Wesleyan), and W. Rawlinson, Esq., of Taunton. The whole of the meetings were of the most gratifying character. The new building called forth unqualified praise as to appearance, thorough solidity, commodiousness, and convenience of arrangement.

FOXTON, LEICESTERSHIRE.—The opening of a new chapel at the rural village of Foxton, in Leicestershire, took place on Thursday, May 25th, and was well attended by the leading Dissenters residing in the vicinity. The old chapel was built as early as 1716, and was therefore one of the oldest buildings of the kind in the county. It had become very dilapidated, and it speaks well for the zeal of the denomination and the success of the voluntary principle, that a determination to make an entirely new building was resolved upon and promptly executed. The new chapel has been erected at a cost of about £1,100. The opening services were crowded. The Rev. C. Vince, of Birmingham, preached, and the morning service produced the liberal collection of £92 3s. A cold collation succeeded; and, in the afternoon, a tea-meeting was well patronised. A bazaar of fancy goods occupied the vestry, and included a great variety of articles, presided over by several ladies of the vicinity. The concluding service in the evening was well attended; and the total proceeds of the day amounted to over £300. The chapel is erected in the Gothic style of architecture; it is built of brick, with stone dressings to the openings, and with a sparing use of blue brick bands to relieve the monotony of the general red surface. At the rear of the chapel, a vestry and suitable school-rooms have been erected. The buildings are inclosed on the street front by an ornamental iron palisade fence and gates. The chapel will accommodate 250 people. The total sum obtained at all the services was £342. A harmonium of suitable power and excellent tone was presented to the congregation by the architect, Mr. Shenton.

EBENEZER CHAPEL, COSELEY. — On Monday, May 29th, the public recognition of the Rev. W. Green (formerly of Chipping Norton), as pastor of this church, was celebrated. At five o'clock the friends from the surrounding churches met those of the place, to partake of a good tea, provided in the school-rooms adjoining their beautiful chapel. Then followed a religious service. A hymn of praise having been sung, prayer was offered by the Rev. Mr. Warner, of Sedgley. The Rev. Mr. Owen, of Smethwick, as the oldest minister present, was called to the chair. W. Barnet, Esq., the senior deacon of the church, read a statement of the steps which had led to Mr. Green's settlement; to which the reverend gentleman replied in a paper rich in beautiful thoughts, tracing the hand of God through his past ministerial life, and expressing confidence and hope in him as to the future. A recognition prayer was offered by the Rev. Richard Nightingale. The Rev. J. J. Brown, of Birmingham, delivered a valuable address on "The Relation of a Church to its Pastor;" and the Rev. Charles Vince, of Birmingham, one on "The Relation of the Church to the World." The Revs. J. P. Carey, of Wolverhampton; J. P. Barnett, of Birmingham; D. Evans, of Dudley; B. C. Young, of Coseley; and W. Jackson, of Bilston,

welcomed Mr. Green into the district with some of the kindliest words that could be offered; when, thanks having been moved to the chairman, the meeting was dismissed, all feeling that the new pastor had had a pleasing inaugural to his promising sphere.

CEMETERY ROAD, SHEFFIELD.—The public recognition of the Rev. Giles Hester, formerly of Loughborough, as the pastor of the church in this place, took place on Tuesday evening, May 23rd. A considerable number of the members of the congregation and their friends sat down to tea in the school-room, and afterwards a public meeting was held in the chapel. The Rev. E. Stevenson, of Loughborough, was called to the chair. The chairman, in opening the proceedings, said that as an old friend of the newly-appointed minister, he looked upon the present proceedings with the greatest interest. Dr. Stacey, of Ranmoor College, offered his contribution to the general welcome which had been extended to Mr. Hester by the ministers of the town. The Rev. W. Evans, of Staleybridge, addressed the meeting in a brief speech, in which he referred to a fourteen years' acquaintance with Mr. Hester; and he was followed by the Rev. J. P. Campbell, who congratulated the church and congregation upon the selection they had made. The Rev. H. Tarrant, in an earnest speech, welcomed Mr. Hester in the name of the various congregations of the town, and extended to him the right hand of fellowship. The Rev. Giles Hester heartily reciprocated the kind expressions of feeling from the chairman, to whom he was already under very many obligations for kindnesses received; and he acknowledged gratefully the kind welcome extended to him. Earnest and practical addresses were afterwards delivered by the Revs. W. Best, B.A., of Leeds, D. Loxton, Brewin Grant, B.A., J. Calvert, C. H. Boden, J. Breakey, R. Stainton; and by Messrs. B. Baldwin and T. Marshall, of Loughborough. The Rev. J. Newsholme concluded the meeting with prayer.

CREWE, CHESHIRE.—On Thursday afternoon, May 25th, the corner-stone of the new Baptist chapel and schools, at Crewe, was laid by Mr. Henry Kelsall, of Rochdale, assisted by an influential assembly of ministers and other friends. The congregation for which the building is to be erected is that of the Rev. W. J. Reade, and an offshoot from one whose seniority is not of many years, but respectable in a place that may ascribe its own birth to the railway era. The cost of chapel and schools is expected to be upwards of £1,000, including the land. Of this sum about £900 has been raised by subscription. The ceremony began shortly before five o'clock. In the cavity of the stone was deposited a bottle containing a written statement that the church was founded "for the use of the Society of Protestant Dissenters called Particular, or Calvinistic, Baptists, formed on the basis of love to our Lord Jesus Christ as the terms of communion." A number of coins and newspapers, including a copy of *The Freeman*, had been likewise placed in the bottle. A silver trowel, of remarkably beautiful design, by Messrs. Webb, of Wolverhampton, was presented to Mr. Kelsall by Mr. R. Pedley (of Crewe), as the gift of the trustees. The stone, whereon was fixed a plate appropriately inscribed, was then adjusted with the usual formalities by Mr. Kelsall. He afterwards made a short speech, which was frequently applauded. The Rev. Mr. Vince also spoke. In the evening, after a public tea-party, the Rev. Mr. Vince delivered in the Town Hall his popular lecture, entitled "Life in England a Hundred Years Ago," to a crowded and delighted audience.

COLEFORD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE. — Services in connexion with the ordination of the Rev. W. H. Tetley were held in the Baptist chapel here on Tuesday, May 23rd. The day was highly successful, both as to congregations and services. The morning service was opened at eleven o'clock by praise and devotion, in which the Revs. L. Thomas and R. Stevens, M.A. (Independents), joined. The Rev. J. W. Lance, of Newport, delivered the introductory discourse, which was a clear and masterly exposition of John xvii. 9. The Rev. S. G. Green, B.A., then requested the recently-settled pastor to give a statement of his doctrinal belief. This was done by Mr. Tetley in an able and interesting manner, and was followed by the ordination prayer, which was offered by the Rev. W. Collings, of Gloucester. The Rev. S. G. Green then delivered an eloquent and instructive charge to the minister from 1 Cor. ii. 10. At the conclusion of the morning service, which was marked by the deepest interest throughout, the ministers and a number of the friends dined together. In the evening, at five o'clock, nearly 500 persons sat down to tea, and at seven o'clock the Rev. Charles Vince, of Birmingham, preached with his usual ease and power to a very large and attentive congregation, from 1 John iii. 3. The day's proceedings will long be remembered by the friends in the neighbourhood.

MINISTERIAL CHANGES.—Mr. S. Crabb, of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon's College, has accepted a unanimous invitation to become the pastor of the church in Aberchirder, Banffshire.—The Rev. J. Gibbs, having announced his intention to resign the pastorate of the church assembling in Salem Chapel, Romford, at the end of the present quarter, is open to invitations to supply vacant churches. His address is, London Road, Romford.—The Rev. W. Davies, Holyhead, has accepted a unanimous call from Bethel church, Merthyr Tydvil, and intends to commence his labours there July 30th.—The Rev. E. Jenkins has resumed the pastorate of the church at Madeley, Salop, and has commenced his labours.—The Rev. W. Payne, in consequence of continued ill health, has resigned the pastorate of the church in the Lower Chapel, Chesham, Bucks, which he has held for nearly thirty-one years.—The Rev. W. Emery, of Hemel Hempstead, has accepted the unanimous invitation of the church at Windmill Street, Gravesend, to become its pastor, and expects to enter upon his duties on the last Sunday in June.—The Rev. T. D. Reynolds, who was formerly for nearly twenty years minister of the Baptist chapel at Earl's Colne, Essex, and afterwards of Henrietta Street Chapel, Brunswick Square, London, has received a unanimous invitation from the Congregational church worshipping at St. Helen's Lane Chapel, Colchester, to become their pastor.—The Rev. D. W. Morris, of Cwmsarnddu, has accepted the unanimous invitation of the Baptist church at Bethlehem, Swansea.—Mr. D. B. Jones, of Pontypool College, has received a cordial and unanimous invitation from the English Baptist church, Providence, Canton, Cardiff, and commenced his labours on Sunday, the 18th June.—The Rev. J. Turner, of the Old Swan Chapel, Liverpool, has accepted the unanimous invitation to the pastorate of the church, Wednesbury, Staffordshire.—The Rev. W. T. Whitmarsh, having accepted the pastorate of the church at Brixham, Devon, vacant by the resignation of the Rev. W. W. Laskey, announced his intention to resign the pastorate at Shefford, Beds, at the close of last month.—The Rev. T. A. Price, of Manorbier, has accepted a unanimous call to the pastorate of the English Baptist church at Aberdare, and intends (D.V.) entering upon his duties the third Sabbath in August.

GENERAL.

THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE.—*The Morning Post* of June 23rd writes:—"It is beyond doubt that the course of events points to a gradual loosening and ultimate disruption of the bonds of Church and State. Ought this to startle us? We think not. It is part of the inevitability of the law that governs the growth of society. If the change threatened the vitality of religion, and the real interests of the Church, or the safety of the country, we might well be alarmed. But reflection will show that it does none of these." The upper ten thousand for whom *The Post* purveys fashionable intelligence are thus accustoming themselves to the idea of "the inevitable disruption"!

Editorial Notes for the Month.

AMERICAN affairs have not yet *quite* ceased to occupy attention. The capture of Jefferson Davis, and the trial of the murderers of Abraham Lincoln, have continued to excite interest in both hemispheres; and not until the tragedy is finished, and the fate of the criminals decided, will the eyes of Englishmen cease to strain across the waters of the Atlantic. As to the fate of the murderers of the great and good President, there will not, we apprehend, with those who accept the doctrine of capital punishments at least, be a moment's doubt. Even those who object to capital punishment in ordinary cases, can hardly resist the feeling that *this* is a case in which blood calls for blood. As to what should be done with Jefferson Davis, opinion is by no means equally decided. For our-

selves, with all our dislike of the man and hatred of his cause, we should mourn to see his life taken, or even his liberty withdrawn. Let him go! America can now afford to be magnanimous. If he be tried, as he must be, and found guilty, *and then pardoned on the single condition of expatriation*, the American republic will stand higher than ever in the eyes of the civilized world. Anyhow, the war is manifestly over. There is no longer any Southern army in the field. Southern generals and Southern soldiers are all at the mercy of the victorious North. The fate of slavery too is sealed. The question that is now being discussed, with all probability of a positive solution, is whether the blacks shall not be admitted to the franchise, and thus placed politically on the same level as the whites.

At home, we are all looking forward to a General Election. By the second week in this month it is expected that Parliament will be dissolved; and then noble lords and honourable members must all stand face to face with their constituents. To too many the ordeal will be a painful one. How many pledges remain unfulfilled! How different things have looked from the floor of the House of Commons from what they did when the candidates stood on the hustings! Without demanding too severe an inquiry into the failures of the past, we do trust that electors will be decided in their demands for the future. For one thing, ecclesiastical questions must not be left in abeyance. No candidate should receive the vote of a Dissenting Elector who will not at least vote for the Abolition of Church Rates; and in most cases the candidate should be required to pledge himself to vote for an Inquiry, if one should be proposed, into our present politico-ecclesiastical system. We do trust that Christian men and Nonconformists will not be so carried away by the cry of "Palmerston for ever," as to consent to hold in abeyance the great principles which they of all men are called to defend.

There is one thing that is attracting the attention of all Englishmen now, and that is the laying of the Atlantic Telegraph. Before the middle of this month, the *Great Eastern* will have set out on its momentous voyage: we hope that by the time our next number appears, we shall be able to announce that the cable has been successfully laid. No enterprise of modern times has excited deeper interest: upon the success of no enterprise has there ever depended more important results.

Our own denomination has been occupied during the past month with the meetings of the Associations. Of the separate meetings we have given as good an account as we could procure elsewhere. As far as we can judge, the reports this year appear to be somewhat more favourable than those of last year; but they are still sufficiently discouraging to suggest the most solemn and devout investigation. Assuredly, the slow progress of our churches ought to be to us a source of deep anxiety. Ought it not to be to us a cause of anxiety that the state of things amongst us does not make us more anxious than we are?

THE

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"WEAK CHURCHES."

We Baptists have a *penchant* for setting up little churches which can never by any possibility run alone. There must be a peculiar tendency to split and splinter in the stones of "our Zion." In towns, it is much easier to find a place with no Baptist chapel than a place with only one, or with no more than are needed. The sacred right of secession is almost as precious to us as "the sacred right of revolution" to Frenchmen. Good motives and bad curiously mingled, zeal outrunning discretion, love for souls and love for power, sanguine temperaments, and honest desire to do good, lead to the establishment of "causes" which are destined from their birth to feebleness. In the country districts, who does not know multitudes of places with spare population where a church has been formed that can never grow to any extent, nor become self-supporting? We could lay our fingers on half-a-dozen such cases within a circle of ten miles, and our readers could doubtless mostly do the same in their own localities. The consequence of this multiplication of small churches seems to us to be disastrous in many ways. There is great loss of power and weight. The history of many such congregations is one unvaried tale of struggles against circumstances which cannot be overcome. There are short pastorates of a few years' duration, all running over the same cycle of a hopeful beginning, an apparent stir for a time, the return of the old difficulties of small success and insufficient maintenance, then the pastor's resignation—and the vacant pulpit. In regard to ministerial support, it is simply a sheer impossibility for numbers of our country churches, especially the agricultural districts, to provide adequately for a minister's wants. It must be distinctly kept in view, in all discussions on that matter, that whatever methods of collection be adopted, and whatever liberality may be evoked, there will be a formidable residue of congregations which absolutely cannot raise a sufficient sum a year for this purpose. Suppose a case—which is not only a supposition—of a people made up entirely of farm-labourers on ten or twelve shillings a week, with a shilling of that, perhaps, kept back for rent. A good-sized village audience of that description may number some fifty or sixty heads of families, besides a proportion of single persons. It would be hopeless to

expect from them an average of even a penny a week for each member of the congregation. The farm-labourer with four or five children could not give sixpence out of his scanty weekly wages; and the very utmost amount which could be expected would not exceed £30 a year, while something very much below that sum would be nearer the mark in a vast number of instances. Having regard to these things, it may not be out of place to urge the modest question, whether the system of small and feeble congregations, each with a minister withdrawn from secular pursuits and necessarily dependent on sources outside of his church for some portion of his support, is not capable of improvement.

We are bound, before going further, to bear our humble but most sincere testimony to the noble patience and admirable self-denial of the great body of the ministers who fill these posts. We shall sadly fail in expressing our meaning in this article, if we leave any impression of undervaluing their labours, or not feeling their trials. On the contrary, we look with the most unfeigned reverence on the life of the village pastor. Sympathy with him in his difficulties contends with homage to the Christian spirit which bears him up in them all. It is a hard course he has to walk. His work is done with none to praise and very very few to love. He has none of the *éclat* and pleasurable excitement which helps men in more conspicuous situations—his labours are unvaried, unceasing, and unapplauded; narrow means constantly fetter the spring of his spirit, and, too often, uncongenial associates are all he can command. But through it all, he fags on, preaching many a lesson to men who possess all he has not, and yet perhaps fall far beneath him in the single-mindedness and earnestness of their worth. Sure we are that among the last who shall be first, will be these honoured brethren who labour unknown and solitary in our rural churches, and that the village ministry numbers in its ranks some of the most patient, laborious, and self-denying men whose names have ever been forgotten on earth and cherished in heaven. Nor do we for one moment disparage the results of their worth in the diffusion of the Gospel. Calculated by the rudest of all standards for spiritual success—statistics—the village churches are not behind any in the tokens of God's blessing; and, estimated by finer and more delicate tests, their influence rays out many a beam of light in many a dark corner that could ill spare the little whitewashed chapel on the edge of the common. But might not all good results be preserved and increased by a plan which should bind together three or four weaknesses to make one strength? We throw out the suggestion with all becoming modesty, and without claiming for it the merit of originality. The same thought must often have presented itself to others, looking at the way in which we are frittered up into fragments.

It seems then to us that while there is ample room for the establishment of new churches there is a pressing need for the consolidation of some of the old ones, and indeed we do not see that much more expansion is possible without this concentrating process accompanying it. Our stronger churches are already weighted with the burden of many of the feebler, and it is at a large expenditure in Home Mission, County

Association, and other funds, that the existing agencies are sustained. Materially to increase them seems all but impossible—that is, with our present plan. There does remain very much to do in the breaking up of new ground; but we for our parts begin to despair of seeing much done in that way, unless, by the adoption of some plan of throwing together the places which now depend on extraneous help, funds be set free for growth, which are now absorbed in simple maintenance of the position already attained. We do not mean to propose the abandonment of any stations now occupied, but simply the diminution, by coalescing, of the number of independent churches, each with a separate pastor whom they do not and cannot support.

Such a thing seems quite practicable, and consistent with our polity. There are two ways, at any rate, in which, without violence to the latter, without shutting a single pulpit, and without harming any man, it might be done. Neighbouring small churches might gradually, as occasion served, be consolidated into one community, under one pastor, though meeting in different places. Similarly, the stronger churches, in a large town for instance, might have a cluster of the contiguous feebler ones affiliated to them, recognized as integral parts of the body, and under the presidency of its pastor. We are not aware that such a constitution—that of one church assembling in several places for public worship—trenches on any principle of our ecclesiastical order; and possibly it may be found on examination that the primitive plan contained, as some writers on the subject maintain, this practice in a somewhat modified form. Be that as it may, we cannot see that any leading principle of our church government is perilled by the proposal. And if it could be done without departure from that, we confess that we see no practical difficulties beyond those which beset every attempt to disturb old habits and associations. One thing it would involve, which would be a mighty gain, the employment of a large amount of what we have to call, for want of another word for it, "lay preaching." With but one pastor over several congregations, we should have to call into active service the members of the church, to their own great benefit, as well as to the good of others. We should count that result as one of the most valuable that could be attained, for there is great and reprehensible indifference amongst us as to the duty which belongs to us all of making known Christ's name. No greater calamity certainly could befall our churches than that, in their present state, an itch for talking in public should seize the mass of their male members; but, on the other hand, there is a huge amount of power running to waste which might do good service in public preaching. It is pitiable to think of such sore need on the one side, and of such capacity to supply it on the other, kept apart by carelessness and love of comfort, so that the hunger is unappeased, and the stores are unopened. This is not the place to appeal on the subject more at large; but we cannot but express our conviction of the heavy weight of responsibility lying on the shoulders of Christian men, who are to be found in numbers in our churches, who can speak on platforms and hustings, and who will not speak for Christ. They do not know the benefit they would receive—they cannot rightly feel the blessings they might impart—

or surely they would not be content to sit Sunday after Sunday as passive receivers, to whom the Word of the Lord comes in only, and from whom it never comes out, while there are not tongues enough to reach a tithe of those who need to hear, and while the resources of the church are overburdened in the attempt to provide paid agents enough to evangelize the land. Such seems to us to be a feasible plan—the consolidation of our small non-self-supporting churches, and the enlarged use of lay agency. Of course, no such change could be effected quickly, nor without the full consent of all parties concerned; and, equally of course, we have no controlling power, which could either prevent the formation of new churches of the kind we have been referring to, or induce the coalescing of the old. But it would be a great point gained if there were a general concurrence in the opinion that our multiplication of small churches has been carried far enough, and that it would be a good thing to reverse the process now. County associations and influential persons in prominent positions may do much to discourage the unnecessary founding of new places, which are destined to hang on others for their support; and by slow degrees some steps may be taken in the right direction.

One thing is very certain, that if every fresh station is to be regarded as incomplete, until it is erected into a separate church, with a pastor whose maintenance, in whole or in part, depends on the denomination in general, we must give up extension altogether, or we shall be swamped. We shall be driven from the practice by the unmanageable expense it entails, and from sheer lack of funds we shall have to overrun the new ground which we occupy in a new and less costly fashion. The church has not money enough at its command to evangelize England by an army of regularly paid ministers; but it has men enough, if they would come out of the ranks and volunteer to do it. There is abundant work for the one class and for the other. Neither can spare the other. Each is responsible for his share of the common duty.

It is not only in its bearing upon our inefficiency in aggressive work, and upon the ministerial support question, that we venture to regard this subject as important. There are many other ways in which the smallness of these communities works for harm. Their whole power is often at the mercy of one man. They are often without a single man of practical common sense and business habits, and so, when left alone by the resignation of a pastor, they make woful mistakes sometimes, and get into sad disorder. If all these evils be avoided, still the cramping effect of a narrow circle works badly and strongly—there is little stimulus, there is little variety of character and circumstances among the members. All are alike in station, in the influences that make and mould them. All bring pretty nearly the same kind of contributions to the general stock. If a church be a mere gathering of men to be preached to, its numbers are of secondary consequence, but if it be a fellowship where each brings his quota to the stores of the whole, and where every man is at once to give and to receive, where the individual character is to be built up and corrected, and where even the feeble are necessary that their brethren may learn pity, patience, and tolerance, then the wider the circle, and the richer and more manifold

the influences brought to bear, the more likely is it, other things being equal, that the purposes of that sacred fellowship will be accomplished.

It seems to us, then, that whether we look at the provision for the temporal wants of the ministry, or at the need for greatly increased aggressive efforts, or at the general vigour of Christian life, all these objects would be materially served by any plan which should gradually diminish the number of dependent Independent churches by wise coalescence, and should discourage the establishment of such, except under peculiar circumstances, and as branches of other churches, or of a Home Mission Society.

AFTER SERVICE.

It is Sunday morning; twelve o'clock has just struck; service is over. The first intimation of the last-named fact to one standing outside the chapel is the gradual and half-muffled strain of music within. The organ is concluding its duties with a voluntary. Suddenly the chapel-keeper appears at one door, and his wife at the other, fastening them back. Next comes the congregation. Three little boys who have been restlessly awaiting the benediction hasten out, cap in hand and quick of step, delighted that the tiresome hour and a half is once more over. One or two servant-maids follow, adorned with a considerable assortment of gay colours in bonnet, shawl, and dress, and emulating their mistresses in the wide extent of what the ancients would have called *farthingales*. Then an old man totters forth, almost bent double, leaning on a trusty old stick, breathing as if his poor old respiratory apparatus must be considerably the worse for wear, wearing a patched old suit of clothes which seem to be growing, in their divers shades and hues, like Joseph's coat of many colours. A heterogeneous crowd succeeds. Some countenances have an aspect of almost unmitigated weariness, speaking of patience exhausted, and temper well-nigh gone. They seem to say in behalf of their owners, "Am I not glad it's all ended? Isn't it a relief to get out again?" Other faces tell tales still more disagreeable. They bear unmistakable traces of sleep. "Tired nature's sweet restorer" has evidently visited the pew as well as the bed, the chapel not less than the chamber. Eutychus has had his modern imitators. Other visages are more pleasing, and of course present great variety for the study of the physiognomist. Many are the words of salutation, and much shaking of hands is effected. Then, as the living stream divides into minor currents in the street, or settles into small collections of gossips, manifold are the topics talked about. The first, it need hardly be said, is the weather. Trust Englishmen for *that*. Every one tells every one what all know already, namely, that it is a dull day or a nice day, wet or fine, pinching cold or burning hot, as the case may be. A quarter of an hour suffices to see the congregation all gone. None are left. The chapel is as vacant as if it had been buried among the volcano-covered streets of lonely Herculaneum or dead Pompeii. Pulpit, pew, gallery, vestry, school-room quite empty. Had he been living, John Foster might have used it for his study, as was his wont with a similar place, pacing up and down the deserted aisles.

Could we by a mysterious and ubiquitous power be present at each dinner-table when the dismissed members of the congregation are seated around their social boards, what should we hear? Many things in general, but one thing in particular. There would, we apprehend, be few cases in which the sermon

would not come in for a considerable amount of remark. "What did you think of the sermon?" would be a question to which we should frequently hearken. Of course we should notice great diversity in the observations made. Some would be commendatory, others condemnatory, others half one and half the other. Not a little of the spirit and tone of the said observations would depend upon the length of time the minister had been in the place. If he had been there a considerable period, with many his discourses would go hard, with others a charitable temper would be displayed towards them because he was a kind man, or a pious man, or a useful man. If he had been there but a few months or weeks, large would be the admiration of manner and matter alike, minute the reiteration of all the prime points in his address, and numerous the adjectives in the superlative degree used to extol his good qualities. But, under all circumstances, there would be criticism. It might be correct or incorrect, kind or unkind, consistent or inconsistent, but, in one form or another, there would be, in nearly every habitation, a free discussion of what had been listened to in the place of worship.

"Well," says the reader, "Pray what of that? Is there any harm in it? Other public men are sat in judgment upon, why should ministers go scot-free? Authors, editors, lecturers, speakers at meetings have their merits and demerits canvassed; is there any good reason for 'the cloth' escaping like treatment? If a discourse is one worth preaching, then its preacher need not fear any remarks that may be made about it; if it is not, then the dread of what his hearers may say in its disfavour may stimulate him either to improve, or to leave an office for which he has no true qualifications. People have a perfect right to criticise sermons as well as anything else." As to the right to do this, of course, in one sense, you have. You have a *legal* right to do it. There is no law against it on our statute-books. The warrant will not be out against you, nor will an official in blue clothes lay his hand on your shoulder and inform you that you are his prisoner if you do it. But there are many things legally right which few of us would think of doing. For instance, you have the legal right to purchase and practise upon a trombone every night after business. You can fill your parlour, kitchen, hall, front garden, and back yard with the exceedingly melodious sounds made by that instrument by persons who play solos upon it in the effort to master it. Although, however, you have the legal right to do so, adding thereto, if you like, a kettle drum for the amusement of your little boy, you may justly doubt whether you have a *moral* right to do it. Moral law demands that we respect the comfort of others, not ruthlessly sacrificing that comfort merely to gratify a personal caprice; and certainly your nocturnal performances upon the brass instrument in question would not tend to promote the comfort of your neighbours on either side. If this be correct, then you do not settle the right and wrong of criticising sermons by the somewhat vague remark that you have a "right to do it." That is just the question, whether you have the moral right to do it, at least to do it *in the fashion* in which it is often carried on.

Let us not be misunderstood. We wish to make no excuse for incompetency in the pulpit. Clerical unfitness shall have no palliation here. There is no Christianity in calling white black and black white, neither is there any Christianity in extolling as excellent sermons which are execrable. It is a healthful sentiment which impels men anywhere, or in reference to anything, to level their blows against incompetency. "The right man in the right place," as Mr. Layard said. Neither, again, do we mean to insinuate, by what has been said or will be said, that congregations ought not to judge for themselves about discourses, alive to their excellencies and aware of their defects, conscious of their weak points and acquainted with their strong ones, sensible of failure

and cognisant of success. Certainly not. We must take sound judgment into the synagogue as well as into the shop or the museum. It is dishonouring God to act as if his message and his messenger required less discrimination than persons and things infinitely inferior. What, then, do we mean? In brief, we mean this, that criticism should be *limited*, and that criticism, when expressed at all, should be expressed with great and conscientious *caution*.

It should be limited. It ought not to be allowed to occupy our first and chief attention in hearing or thinking of a discourse. Something else has the precedence. Our main wish should be to be made better by what we hear, not to take to pieces what we hear, not to look at what is introduced to us through the microscope of criticism. Undoubtedly, it is much better to listen to a sermon in which there is correct composition, original thought, and the evidence of superior mental ability, than to have one's attention called to one which is loose in style, hackneyed in matter, and bad in delivery. But this is not the main question. What do we attend a place of worship for? To be made good. That is the legitimate end. Then, if that is the intended object of preaching, let us, in the name of all that is holy and wise and true, remember it and act upon it when the text is announced, the introduction commenced, or the discourse proceeding. "I am, as in God's sight, to get all the moral nourishment, all the spiritual power that I can from what this preacher is saying. I must try and pass by the indifferent parts of this address as soon as I can, dismiss what does not touch me as quickly as possible, and cleave to the really good portions of it. I must try and get encouragement in mastering my faults and sins, in working for Jesus Christ, in forming a due estimate of this world and the solemn eternal world which, by-and-by, I shall enter. This is what God tells me to come here for, and if I do not do it I might as well, nay, I had better be away. Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Speak words that shall inflame my love, enlighten my mind, invigorate my often-faltering and guilty soul; speak to me through this my brother who stands before me with thy word; speak, and I will hear." My reader, ought not this to be our feeling when the minister is preaching? Is not this the most godly and wise method of conducting ourselves in chapel? Vastly superior, surely, to the barren, unprofitable spirit which leads us to busy ourselves about the "mint" of good composition, the "cummin" of elocution, and the "anise" of grammar; vastly superior, surely, to the spirit which leads us to put "firstly" or "secondly" into a mental crucible, and subjects division or sub-division, introduction or application, to the furnace-fires of inappropriate cavil.

Our ministerial readers will remember that when they were preparing for the ministry they used, with their fellow-students, to attend sermon classes. The worthy theological tutor, grave and discriminating, sat at the head of the long table. The unfortunate brother whose turn it was to read had to stand at the other end. All around were the critics. After going through the sermon, perhaps at first with a peculiar tremulousness of voice which indicated a nervousness the face endeavoured to hide, he sat down. One by one the assembled brethren delivered themselves of the divers comments which they had jotted down during the reading of the discourse. The whole closed with a summing up by the tutor. Now these sermon classes are good things *in colleges*, but bad things in chapels. When we make our mental notes as the "ambassador for Christ" proclaims his Master's message as if he were standing there to receive our verdict, we strangely mistake our and his work and duty. But let us, on the contrary, try to hear the Saviour speak by him and through him, and we shall not have spent the half or three-quarters of an hour in vain. Sir Walter Scott used to say that he never met with any one without learning from them. Even the groom that rubbed down his horse taught him something.

How was this? Because he had the *disposition* to improve himself. In like manner, if we have the disposition to improve ourselves spiritually we shall gain help, more or less, from any preacher or any sermon. Do you doubt this, my friend? Don't smile incredulously, but make the experiment. Put the matter to the proof. The next time you enter a chapel resolve as you take your seat that you will get as much good as you possibly can from what you hear. We feel confident of the result. Be a critic, and you will come away perhaps murmuring and out of temper, certainly little better for what has occupied your attention. Be a learner, and you will be blessed.

We make no apology for introducing from his work, *The Stones of Venice*, the following remarks by Mr. Ruskin:—"There are two ways of regarding a sermon, either as a human composition or a divine message. If we look upon it entirely as the first, and require our clergymen to finish it with their utmost care and learning for our better delight, whether of ear or intellect, we shall necessarily be led to expect much formality and stateliness in its delivery, and to think that all is not well if the pulpit have not a golden fringe around it, and a goodly cushion in front of it, and if the sermon be not fairly written in a black book, to be smoothed upon the cushion in a majestic manner before beginning; all this we shall come duly to expect; but we shall at the same time consider the treatise read as something to which it is our duty to listen without restlessness for half an hour or three quarters, but which when that duty has been decorously performed we may dismiss from our minds in happy confidence of being provided with another when next it shall be necessary. But if once we begin to regard the preacher, whatever his faults, as a man sent with a message to us, which it is a matter of life or death whether we hear or refuse; if we look upon him as set in charge over many spirits in danger of ruin, and having allowed to him but an hour or two in the seven days to speak to them; if we make some endeavour to conceive how precious these hours ought to be to him, a small vantage on the side of God after his flock have been exposed for six days together to the full weight of the world's temptation, and he has been forced to watch the thorn and the thistle springing in their hearts, and to see what wheat had been scattered there snatched from the wayside by this wild bird and the other, and, at last, when breathless and weary with the week's labour they gave him this interval of imperfect and languid hearing, he has but thirty minutes to get at the separate hearts of a thousand men to convince them of all their weaknesses, to shame them for all their sins, to warn them of all their dangers, to try by *this* way and *that* to stir the hard fastenings of those doors where the Master himself has stood and knocked yet none opened, and to call at the openings of those dark streets where wisdom herself has stretched forth her hands and no man regarded,—let us but once understand and feel this, and we shall look with changed eyes upon the place from which the message of judgment is delivered, which either breathes upon the dry bones that they may live, or, if ineffectual, remains recorded in condemnation against the listener."

Criticism, then, should be kept in complete abeyance to a docile disposition. Our grand aim should be, not to dissect a sermon, but to appropriate to ourselves everything in it that is calculated to make us better. But this is not all. We said, at the beginning, that the other rule to be observed about criticism is that when it is expressed it should be *cautiously* expressed. There is great need of the enforcement of this principle. Much and serious injury is often done through Christian men and women talking at random about sermons in the hearing of the unconverted. Again and again we have listened to disparaging remarks upon discourses which, though not great, were earnest and faithful; remarks calculated to prejudice the minds of children, servants, and others who

might hear them, against the preacher; remarks made without the slightest regard to their influence upon those who hearkened to them. In this way, we feel sure, the good that is done in the chapel is often undone in the house, the member obliterates the right impressions made by the minister, convictions which promised to end in conversion perish, and tares are sown among the wheat. Not unfrequently when lamenting and exposing the unhappy effects of dissipated or careless company on young men who have been accustomed to attend public worship, do religious people deprecate such company because it nullifies the words and voice of the preacher. Let us take heed lest in thus speaking we condemn ourselves. It matters little what hand it is that strikes the blow against a fellow-creature's eternal weal; it matters little how that blow is given; it matters little whether it be intentional or unintentional; the *effects* are the same, and hence our need of caution in what we may say of those who are the public and acknowledged teachers of the truth as it is in Jesus.

We cannot too often remind ourselves and each other of the duty which, as disciples of the Redeemer, we have to discharge. We ought to try by example to show men the loveliness of religion; we ought by word and prayer to bring the guilty to him who is able to save. Whatever our outward lot, this is our work. Wherever we may be, this is our work. By whomsoever surrounded, this is our work.

"Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate;
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord, on whom I wait."

If we will but keep this, our high vocation, uppermost in our thoughts, we shall not do harm by injudicious words. Shallow and impertinent criticism about efforts to do good, which, despite their weakness, are well meant, we shall not utter. Regarding this we shall practise the rare virtue of silence. "I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked are before me." You know who said that, and what a holy man he was. Be it ours to do likewise. If we cannot speak commendingly of appeals made in behalf of salvation and the Saviour, at least let us hold our peace in the presence of such as are unsaved. People are ready enough, without our aid, to snatch at excuses for not serving God. We need not hurl obstacles under the Gospel-chariot's wheel; there are too many on the road as it is. Remove those that are there, if you can; but, in the name of the Lord, do not add to their number.

BROTHERHOOD.

THE incompleteness with which the ideal of church fellowship is realized is one of the worst of our evils. The theory itself sketches out the grandest vision of a society bound together by bonds uniting in themselves the strongest principles of association that have ever banded man, while escaping the evils of each, and surpassing the excellences of all. Deeper than oneness of opinion, but embodying that without its narrowness—deeper than similarity of purpose, but containing that—closer than friendship, but with all its warmth—more secure than kindred, but with all its familiarity—grander than nationality, but with all its power, this bond of

perfectness, which is not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, nor of blood, but of God, and rests neither upon the arbitrariness of personal predilection, nor upon the accidents of local or temporary relations, but upon the eternal divine fact of Christ's love to us, and sees in each seen brother a shadow of the unseen Father, is the fairest picture that ever hung before the imagination of weary quarrelling men. The practice, what of it? Looking around us on all sections of God's church, we see these not only in a state of armed neutrality as regards each other, but internally a woful falling off from the picture, to say the least of it. We do not wish to forget the facts on the other side. The Gospel would be no Gospel, were there not some. But making thankful allowance for them all, it remains too sadly true that the communion of Christian men within the limits of their own bodies, is not consciously the closest and sacredest form of association which they possess, and does not yield in general the fruits which should come from it. The state of almost all our principal denominations too fully confirms this.

Our present business is not, however, with the public acts of churches, so much as with their private mutual intercourse. It is not only active hostility, but passive indifference which sins against this sacred bond. Is our church fellowship, say within the limits of one congregation, a reality, or a form and a name? Do we feel anything like the closeness of hold and certainty of sympathy in one another which should mark us? Do we even all know one another? Is it not largely felt by us that other relations are more real and fruitful than this? Dr. Chalmers once said in answer to his wife's surprise that he sat one evening nearly silent in the company of a long-absent and longed-for friend, "There's a great deal, my dear, in *juxta-position*." So seem many of us to think in regard to this matter; and hence we fill our pews on Sunday, and sit together at the communion table; but as soon as we get outside the chapel door, we fall under the power of other principles of association than those of the church, and find our true brethren, whom we sympathize with, and work beside, and think after, somewhere else. The contrast between the theory and the practice is only too obvious.

The evil effects of this imperfect realization of Christian brotherhood run through our whole spiritual life, and weaken our whole testimony for Christ. On Christian men themselves the disastrous consequences can scarcely be enumerated, and certainly not estimated in all their subtle interworking. The narrowing of the noblest sympathies; the loss of lessons from many an aching heart which would more than repay the oil and wine expended on it; the enfeebling of holy aspirations for want of utterance, and the dying out of hallowed thoughts because there are none to strengthen them by partaking; the exaggeration of individual peculiarities till they become defects from not seeing how differently others reflect the likeness of the common Lord; the missing of many an opportunity of helping one whom God loves, and of being helped in turn; the shrinking of faith because it seldom comes to view in the company of unbelievers, of hope because it is so lonely to hope alone, of charity because the chosen society has no power to touch its deepest springs—all these, and a thousand more, are the

pains and penalties under which we break the law of Christ—the real deep active love of the Christian men nearest us. Hence we grow in exclusiveness, in class feeling, in distance from others, in love for coteries and cliques, *pari passu* with the rest of the nation. Hence, too, which is worse still, our power for the efficient service of God is diminished, not only because we do not wield the associated might which we have unconsciously in store, but because our alienation and coldness to one another have keen eyes watching them. Mr. Kingsley puts a bitter sarcasm but a mournful truth into the mouth of Sandy Mackay, in *Alton Locke*, when he makes him say, "Gin I hadna seen in my youth that a brither in Christ meant less a thousandfold than a brither out o' him, I might ha' believ't the noo." Even so—when men find, or, at least, have colourable grounds for supposing themselves to find, that the common affection of man to man, and the special bonds of some *esprit de corps* in trade or profession, or even a benefit club, or a scientific institute, are as strong as those of the church of Christ, no wonder that they think the whole thing a sham. If we seek to win over a large class of men amongst us, who have been smitten with the fair dream of a good time coming, and have been sickened with the hope deferred of chartist agitation and vulgar communism, we can make no better beginning than to give a practical exhibition of the church as the fulfilment of the vision which has floated deceptive and unfulfilled before many a noble erring heart, of a time when all the world "shall brithers be for a' that." These days of association, this Anglo-Saxon people with its strong tendency in that direction, need more than ever the setting forth, not in words, nor in any theory of a mystical corporation, but in the solid reality of a company of men living together in strong affection and mutual helpfulness, of the one grand society which is the church of God. Whilst they see that accidentals of rank and culture have as trenchant a dividing power in that church as out of it, they will quote James against us, and be illogical enough both to condemn us for being inconsistent with our belief, and our belief for letting us be inconsistent.

If the evil which we have imperfectly tried to describe be admitted, the causes of it will not be far to seek. They are of two kinds, more superficial and more deep. In the former category we might place all those which are connected with the present state of society. The growing complexity of our civilization, the increase of wealth, and the degree to which the principle of the division of labour is carried, have the effect of separating our population more sharply than ever into non-communicating clusters. The growth of education, too, has not been equable, and perhaps the gulf between the more cultivated classes and the more unlettered is greater now than ever before. So that there results a yawning chasm between class and class, according to rank, wealth, occupation, and culture. Alas, that our marvellous national growth should be accompanied by such a consequence, and that the light which falls on the highest land first should make the shade in the valley darker before it fills that, too, with its beams! But so it is. The gravest fact with which modern society has to deal is this tendency to curdle into clots rather than to adhere in a solid whole. Another cause is to be found in the greatly increased number of associations

for other purposes than the church has in view. The society-forming mania has had ridicule enough poured upon it, and enthusiastic eulogiums to counterbalance. It deserves neither, but, as one of the prominent features of the times, its influence upon the Christian church deserves careful consideration. Here we cannot enter upon anything like discussion of the question, but simply point out that one of its consequences, at all events, is to make the association for Christian fellowship less absorbing and all-important than it was in the days when that was almost the only society. Now-a-days, our church members are on half-a-dozen committees for all manner of things; and what with literary institutes, and political associations, and benevolent committees, and town councils, they have become so familiar with the principle, that they do not sufficiently discern the incalculable difference between these lower embodiments of it, and this highest one of all.

Then, again, in this time of mental excitement and transition of opinion, wider differences of tone and dialect find place amongst us than were once common. Of tone and dialect only, as we believe; but still this has its effect.

These are what we have called the more superficial of the causes for the imperfection which attends our embodiment of the Divine ideal of church fellowship. It might be more correct to call them only occasions. The true cause lies deeper. The uniting principle is neither oneness of opinion, nor similarity of condition, but the common love of Christ to us, and the common participation of his Spirit. The sole real cause, then, for any defect in our exemplification of the brotherhood of the church lies in our imperfect reception of that Spirit. The sole way of drawing nearer to our brethren is by each drawing nearer to God. As rays converging to a common centre, the nearer each approaches in its straight course towards that, the nearer does it find itself to all the rest. It is only by going back to the Shepherd of souls that the sheep going astray become a flock. It is only on condition of walking in the light that we have fellowship one with another. And were our churches but filled with that Lord's Spirit, they would be more manifestly a living body, not a heap of fragments. It is the spirit that makes the body a unity. It being gone, dissolution has already begun. God has not let us come to that. But the deficiencies of our brotherhood are consequences and signs of deficiency in our appropriation of the life of Christ. Would God that we Baptists, whose special vocation has been to preach the individualism of Christianity—"Ye are members in particular"—had our hearts turned with more serious attention to this subject, and, by the help of God, began to set forth more clearly than ever we have done the other side of the same truth, the uniting power of Christianity, preaching—"Ye are the body of Christ"—by showing, each in his own sphere, the reality, and depth, and power of Christian brotherhood!

"AFTER RAIN."

Not long ago—it was in the middle of July, that season of delicious twilights—I was sitting alone at sundown, looking thoughtfully upon a garden; also upon a distant view of the English Channel: last and grandest, upon the eastern sky. Scarcely an hour had passed since the heavens had worn a sullen look, seeming to promise a continuance of the rain which had fallen heavily, with exceeding rare and brief intervals, the long day through; though even then, afar off, just above the horizon, I could discern a strip of palest azure, "shot"—as some silk-weaver might express it—with still paler yellow. Upon the sea, which for many previous days had been blue and glistening, lay, at this earlier hour, a broad deep shadow, only relieved by great patches of whitest foam, dashing ever and anon against the rocks that guard our bay. "After a while," thought I, "when the evening mist has gathered above the deep, I shall lose sight of the almost perpendicular cliffs, the craft at anchor, the swift-sailing bark, and the white waves making ever towards the shore." I was mistaken. Looking up from my desk when the time for the "evening mist" was fully come, I beheld a picture of exceeding beauty. All had changed, and the rainy day which had been expected to end in gloom and shadow, closed—to my great astonishment—in marvellous light. In the place of the pale strip of blue which I have described, a thin cloud, tinged with an inimitable crimson glow, was supported by a mass of whitest vapour shutting out the horizon only, and refusing to borrow a single tint from the setting sun. Above this, where a little before all was sombre shade and dulness, such broad lines of amber stretched towards the zenith that I involuntarily changed my position so as to receive, at the same time, but through another window, the last glance of the departing sun. Strange to say, there was nothing remarkable in the appearance of the west. Not a single cloud was *there*. Surprised and curious, I turned once again towards the sea. There it was, still beneath its crimson cloud, out of which rose such long lines of golden glory as heaven only can surpass. As this scene gently faded from my view, giving place to a kind of second twilight, in which, deepening slowly to night's darkest blue, the sky looked down upon me from behind a milky-way of cloud, white and clean as the fine linen of the saints, I began to muse upon the blessedness that comes often, to the souls of God's dear children, "after rain."

Do you remember your first sorrow? What a thick, impenetrable cloud it seemed, and how heavily it weighed down your young spirit "unaccustomed to the yoke." How you mused—with a sickly doubt gnawing at the bottom of your heart—upon the bold assertion of the Scripture that "God is love." How you wished to die, and yet feared to fall into the hands of that Great Chastener before whom, as yet, you had never truly bowed the stubborn knees of your ungrateful soul. How at last, by some process which, even now, you cannot explain, the darkness faded into grey, and the storm ceased to rage, and a streak of crimson appeared in the far-off sky. You began to think that he who gave his only-begotten Son to save the lost, knew best how to train your soul for the hereafter; that the discipline of his hand was designed to wean you from yourself and from your sins, and gently draw you towards holiness and heaven; and that God's smile after deep distress, is more joy-giving than a thousand of those pleasures which endure but for a season. Faith had come, and with it, not only hope, but love to God and man, so that there was sunshine—golden sunshine, "after rain." Speaking soberly, from my own early experience, I can assert with confidence that, even in childhood, a great sorrow may be made to bring forth peace and rest such as the unsubmitting heart can never know. From the

grave of an infant brother, whose winsome ways had been the joy of our home circle, blossomed, for me, many flowers of no common fragrance. Thoughts of death in its loveliest aspect; hopes of heaven undimmed by a single fear; trust in God as the great Father of all; a filial sympathy more true and lasting, and a sisterly affection more unselfish and refined,—all these things arose, through the mercy of God, from my first sorrow. And even now, when many a long year has flown, I can never muse upon the solemn days which came between the little child's sudden death and his burial in a hill-side graveyard miles away, without becoming more hopeful and content,—the first as concerning heaven and its sure delights, the second as concerning earth and its wondrous, though ever imperfect, treasures of love and beauty. If there is one spot in the world upon which, for me, no shadow falls, it is that of which I thought with so much doubt and fear in the early days of my first sorrow,—my brother's grave.

Of a different kind—but equally deserving comparison with sunshine after rain—is the sweet after-thought of Christian souls when the familiar friend to whom the heart was knit as the heart of David to his "brother" Jonathan, is removed from sight and hearing by the hand of the stern Death-angel, & that the place which once knew him can know him no more for ever. No more! How at first we tremble at that sound, hoping, against hope, to awake from the painful trance and find it all a dream. How we strive in vain to be unselfish and highminded enough to rejoice, in the behalf of our beloved ones, at that death in Christ, which to endure is to enter into *Life*! Fierce and terrible is the ordeal through which some of us have had to pass, while standing by the deathbed of one with whom we walked to the house of God, and took sweet counsel. In that last agony, although *he* might say with truth—"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me," *we*—going with him through the shade, ay, even to the very portals of the tomb!—are for the moment almost comfortless. The rod and staff are not, as we think, for *us*, who remain to beat our way back into the glare and heat of this world's vain, unsatisfying life; but for *him*, going—going, oh, so far away out of our sight! God help us—who at best have but few *real* friends—when we hear the last faint whisper of such a one, and turn aside that we may not see him die; when we wake in the silent night to realize that the joy which *has been*, can be ours, on earth, never again; and that life is long—oh, so cruelly long and lingering!—thirty, forty, fifty years, perhaps—who can tell! and our once boasted faith smaller than a grain of mustard seed! I say, God help us, for he only can, and if we yield ourselves to him, he surely will. Time shall be when his light shall arise upon you, and content succeed to pain. Yes, even content! first of all in your secret consciousness that suffering has made you better; next, that your loved one has been spared the pang of surviving your decease, and awaits you in your everlasting home; last of all, that a faith which can remove mountains has enabled you to glory even in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience a hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost that is given unto you. Is not this sunshine of God's sending, "after rain"!

There is another kind of suffering, less often sanctified than it would be if we had more of our Master's spirit and less of that of the young man who "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions," but nevertheless of incalculable service in the purification of Christian character. Let a man's theory be what it may, a loss of property, seriously affecting those who are nearest and dearest to his heart, is, in actual fact, a source of anguish which no mere worldly philosophy can soothe, no earth-born consolation chase away. In that first conflict with mistrust and discontent which is sternest, oftentimes, in the least selfish

soul, it may seem impossible that such adversity "wears yet a precious jewel in its head." Yet, to every *trusting* soul, it *does* wear, not one jewel only but ten thousand. Out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness. Even before the mist begins to roll away, we find the mosses and lichens and tiny flowers of love and friendship nestling close beside our feet, and speaking with "a still small voice" of the tender love and pity of our God; and, in due time, soon indeed, if we watch and pray for it, comes a token that the pillar of cloud, no less than that of fire, enshrines our guiding and delivering God. In that blissful hour, we are brought very near to heaven, hearing "unspeakable words," and feeling, as we never felt before, that the Son of God—who is also the Son of Man,—is with us in the burning fiery furnace of our affliction. Ah, it is worth while to go through such a season of anxiety if only to feel the power of Christ to support us in its pain, and to bring us off "more than conquerors."

But here some tried soul exclaims—"What of other distresses, worse than death and more terrible than loss of worldly goods; the unkindness of those we love, or the uncertainty which sometimes hangs over the fate of such as have gone far away upon the sea? Is there ever light at eventide, while griefs like these are unremoved?" I reply, Yes, even here, though, possibly, in a different degree. I see now before me the calm face of a Christian woman who, to my certain knowledge, has received a life-long injury at the hands of one whom she nobly and faithfully loved. Years have passed—I do not say that they were not bitter—and at last faith has proved victorious. She is no longer unhappy—she is even content, yet her sorrow is one of the greatest which a woman can be called upon to bear. Again, I have known a mother watch in vain for the return of her only son from a distant land; I have known months and years go by, during which she longed evermore for a word concerning her son's fate, and still in vain. I have seen her "put on mourning" as it is called, and wear it, long and tenderly, for her son: last of all, I have seen her resume her cheerfulness, and calmly wait until God should see fit to draw back the veil of mystery which hung over the fate of "her boy." And it was in the faith that he would do all things well that she hopefully and calmly died. In both these cases there was sunshine "after rain."

There are other times in which we can easily perceive that even in this life, to the souls that trust in God, "every cloud has its silver lining,"—such, for example, are our seasons of restoration to health, and of return, after painful absence, to our own beloved fireside. But, desiring rather to suggest a few thoughts than to work out an idea, I believe that I have written enough. If in these thoughts, suggested by the glory of a summer's evening, there is—as I would fain believe—enough to cheer and encourage the desponding child of God as he ponders even his sorest trouble, directing him to hope still more firmly in the tenderness and wisdom of his God, and to anticipate with unclouded faith the bright hour—it is sure to come if he will only trust and wait—when he shall be brought off "more than conqueror through him who loved him," the simple purpose with which I have written will have been accomplished, and God, once again, will have made the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.

Reviews.

The Scripture Testimony to the Holy Spirit. By JAMES MORGAN, D.D., Belfast. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.

THE idea of this book is so admirable, and there is so much in the book itself that commends itself to our judgment and our heart, that we are reluctant to make any exception to our commendation of it. Yet it would not be honest to deny that it has considerably disappointed us. This, it may be said, is very likely due to no fault in the book, but to our mistaken expectations of what the book was likely to be. And this is to a great extent true. It is not that what is professed and attempted is not done well, but rather that much has been left unattempted which we should have expected to find dealt with. Our disappointment arises from our notion of what a volume with such a title ought to be, and our strong feeling that a volume answering to that notion would be one of the timeliest and most valuable contributions that could be made to our theological literature. Perhaps, too, our expectations were unduly raised by seeing on the titlepage the name of a firm from whom we are in the habit of receiving works distinguished as much for their critical skill and worth, as for their devout and reverent spirit.

It is just this critical element that is almost entirely wanting in Dr. Morgan's work. Throughout the volume popular views of difficult subjects, and popular interpretations of disputed texts, are accepted without even an attempt to vindicate them, almost as though the author was unaware that they had ever been the subject of controversy at all. Examples of what we mean are to be found in the treatment of the text about the striving of the Spirit, in the assumption of a reference to baptism in John iii. 5, in the taking for granted that the gift of tongues was the impartation to the apostles of power to preach in all the different languages spoken by men. These interpretations—and there are many other similar ones—may be right; but surely they should not be assumed as indisputably right in a book which professes to collect and illustrate "the Scripture Testimony to the Holy Spirit." It needs, too, one would think, something more than a summary assertion to show that in the passage, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth," we have "a distinct recognition of the three persons of the Godhead in creation—the word, the Lord, and the breath of his mouth." And how can Dr. Morgan maintain, in the face of Paul's use of the words ψυχή and πνεῦμα, with their derivatives, that the *spirit* is that "which imparts vitality to the body, and which man possesses in common with the inferior animals," while the *soul* is "the reasonable, thinking, accountable, and immortal principle by which he is distinguished from them and elevated above them"?

It is only fair to say that, in his very modest preface, Dr. Morgan disclaims for his book all pretensions to criticism and scholarship. The following paragraph at once explains the spirit and purpose of the work, and goes far to win for it hearty acceptance on the part of the reader:—

"I did not seek, as I was sensible I was not competent, to attain to the great things of scholarship. No thought of such things was in my mind while I prosecuted my labours. I thought of souls, and of their salvation. I thought of the Spirit, and how much sinners needed his grace. I thought of Jesus, and of his glory which the Spirit alone could promote in the earth. I thought of judgment and eternity, and of what God would have me do in prospect of them. I longed to honour the Spirit of Christ. I could not withhold the testimony which I felt myself called upon to bear to him. And I ask no more than that it shall be said of me, 'He hath done what he could.'"

The volume, in short, consists of a series of sermons, preached in the ordinary course of the author's ministry. We wish this fact had been noted on the titlepage. It would have prevented misconceptions, and prepared the reader to give the book the welcome which its excellence deserves.

For as popular expositions of Scripture truth these discourses are, in the main, admirable. They are sound, clear, solemn, practical, and forcible. We should be glad to know that such regular courses of sermons on some grand Scripture subject were more frequently preached by our ministers, and more readily listened to by our congregations. We thank Dr. Morgan for his book, which, if it does not thoroughly satisfy the critic, will assuredly prove edifying to the Christian.

Commentary on the Pentateuch. By C. F. KEIL, D.D., & F. DELITZSCH, D.D. Vol. III. Translated by Rev. J. MARTIN, B.A., Nottingham.

Commentary on the Gospel of St. John. By E. W. HENGSTENBERG, D.D. Vol. I.

Clark's Foreign Theological Library.

THIS commentary on the Pentateuch certainly improves on acquaintance. In reading its earlier sections we were dissatisfied, not to say repelled, by the manner in which the scientific difficulties which beset the account of the Creation, the Deluge, &c., were ignored, or summarily set aside, as though they were the mere cavils of infidelity. That part of the work might have been written fifty years ago. But as the authors have emerged from those chapters into the plain, historical, and descriptive portions of the Pentateuch, their commentary becomes all that could be desired; clear, rapid, thoughtful, and devout. It is the most ready for reference of any German commentary we have met with.

Dr. Hengstenberg's commentary will be most welcome for its author's sake, as well as for its own great value. We, of course, do not profess agreement with all the views and conclusions announced in it,—for example, with the rejection of the story of the woman taken in adultery as altogether unhistorical. Nor need we now describe the character of the work. To announce a work of Dr. Hengstenberg on such a subject will be recommendation enough. The publishers have added another to the many obligations under which they have laid the public, by including this commentary in their Theological Library. The variation from the uniform binding is an improvement as regards appearance, and will facilitate reference by distinguishing one work from another as they stand upon the shelves.

Christian Cabinet.

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

ANANIAS and Sapphira were among the early fruits of the apostolic ministry after the descent of the Spirit, and were numbered among the disciples who constituted the first Christian church. They might have been present on the day of Pentecost, and been witnesses of its wonders;—they saw, perhaps, "the cloven tongues like as of fire," which sat on the heads of the apostles, and heard the words of Peter and were "pricked" by them in their hearts. Or they might have been in the temple, and seen the "impotent man"—to whom they might sometimes have given alms—after being healed by Peter, "walking and leaping and praising God;" and there, drawn towards the apostle when he addressed the multitude, they might have listened to his exhortation, and felt his word come to them in power. Or they might have been induced to accept the new truth, from being brought into personal contact with it through the influence and persuasion of relatives or friends, and so were among one or other of those accessions of disciples whom the Lord "daily added to the church." But, however this might be, *in* the church they were. They had professedly accepted the apostolic message; had been baptized probably by apostolic hands; and might have occasionally received the apostles under their roof, as they

were then in the habit of "breaking bread from house to house." Ananias and Sapphira were in the church when there broke out that extraordinary and affluent gushing of affection—that utter forgetfulness of self—under the new feeling of Christian brotherhood, which "made them that believed of one heart and of one soul," so that "neither said any of them that the things which he possessed were his own; but they had all things common." This went so far, that "as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things which were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet."

Now the precise point to be noted here is, that this relinquishment of property, this scale of contribution to the common fund, involving all that a man possessed, was no divine appointment; it rested on no new revelation, nor on any apostolic law; it was binding on no one; and might have been disregarded without sin. From Peter's words about it we learn that a man's property "was his own," to keep or sell, devote or not, as he pleased; that even if he went so far as to turn lands into money with a view of giving it to the church, if he repented of his purpose, or altered his judgment, he was at liberty to do so; the money, like the land, was "in his own power." All was voluntary; no one compelled. Here, however, comes out the very pith of the lesson with which the incident is fraught. There was no law imposing payment and specifying amount; but there was a public opinion and a general practice that took its place. There was an impulse and an enthusiasm, which you would be singular if you did not obey and share. There was a fashion, so to speak (using the word without prejudice), by which you would be marked or *talked of*, if you did not conform to. This was a severe test to weak natures;—especially if there were combined in such a wish to stand well in the society with a desire to retain their wealth; or a perfectly allowable difference of judgment as to the mode or amount of contribution. This mixed feeling, indeed, is what constitutes the weakness of the weak. Ananias and Sapphira were affected by it. They were swayed by contradictory impulses, and in trying to obey both, they fell. The probability is, that both the motives that influenced them were bad, and that their characters would not have been bettered, though their exposure would have been prevented, had they entirely yielded themselves to one; that is, had they either given up their property, all, absolutely and without reserve; or if they had retained it, and given nothing;—or given openly and professedly a limited donation and no more.

They had not strength to follow out either the one or the other of these courses. Attempting a compromise—a middle path by which they were to get more reputation than they deserved, and to part with less of their property than they pretended—they of course fell into "the snare of the devil, and were taken captive by him at his will." They sold their property, and got the credit of doing so; it might be a public act, or they took care to let it be publicly known. But they could not bring themselves to part with all the purchase-money; they did not like to leave themselves without some reserved pecuniary stay. But their professions had committed them, and they were ashamed to draw back; or rather, indeed, they *wished* the repute of magnanimous liberality without paying the price at which it was to be bought. Either way, they "agreed together" to act a lie, and to tell one if necessary. They made the attempt "to serve God and mammon;"—to honour the one and yet to hold with the other; to seem to sacrifice everything to the church as an act of love, henceforth professedly to live by faith; but storing away as their visible confidence a cruse of oil and barrel of meal that should not fail. It was the "unrighteous mammon" that whispered the promise; they gave him the trust which they withheld from God; the consequence was such as evinced at once the "deceitfulness" of the idol and the folly of his worshippers.

The manner in which Ananias and Sapphira were detected and punished is striking and admonitory, not so much for its display of apostolic power, as for its revelation of the greatness of their sin. That sin consisted in their pretence and hypocrisy, in their wish to secure reputation on the ground of great liberality and personal sacrifice, without either the one or the other; in

their want of faith, evinced by their conforming, or appearing to conform, to a high standard of pecuniary contribution, while their secret and concealed provision for themselves gave the lie to their outward acts, and developed into an open and uttered lie to God. And these people were professed Christians—fellow-communicants with evangelists and apostles—witnesses of the miracles, and attendants on the ministry of inspired men! They were under no obligation, as we have already intimated, to do what they pretended to have done. They were not bound to follow the example of others,—to imitate the zeal and equal the donations of their fellow-disciples, if they could not do so with all their heart, with the approval of their reason, and as the expression of a spontaneous and spiritual impulse. They not only had not moral courage enough to follow their own judgment,—which might have exposed them to remark, though it might have been no sin; but they were tempted to aspire to a reputation for liberality, while their love of money, as an object of trust, led them to try to deceive men and to dissemble with God. Their fate is recorded as a solemn warning for all time;—as an eloquent admonition to every Christian man to be true and transparent, upright and conscientious, especially in professed sacrifices for God. Their sin was their own; their punishment was for us. They were struck down "before all," that others also might fear. They seem to say to us, "'Be not deceived; God is not mocked; he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.' God loveth an upright as well as a 'cheerful giver.' 'The cup of cold water,' in the spirit of a disciple, is of more value than houses and lands in the spirit of the world,—the offering of ostentation, or the extorted gift of an unwelcome necessity,—especially so if, while professing to give all to God, you keep a reserve as a sacrifice to mammon and to self."

People look for the proof of human depravity in the world at large. The most flagrant and fearful proofs of it are to be found in the church. Responsibility is in proportion to advantage; sin is aggravated by privilege and profession. Children of the light, if their deeds are evil, are worse than those who are still wandering in darkness. "If I had not come a light into the world, ye had not had sin, but now ye have no cloak for your sin." "If ye were blind ye should have no sin; but now ye say, *We see*, therefore your sin remaineth."—*Rev. T. Binney.*

Words of Wisdom for Christian People.

FAMILY DISCOURTESY.

I MAINTAIN that in family-life there should be an effort not only to be neat and decent in the arrangement of our person, but to be also what the French call *coquette;* or, to put it in plain English, there should be an endeavour to make ourselves look handsome in the eyes of our dearest friends.

Many worthy women, who would not for the world be found wanting in the matter of personal neatness, seem, somehow, to have the notion that any study of the arts of personal beauty in family-life is unmatronly. They buy their clothes with simple reference to economy, and have them made up without any question of becomingness; and hence marriage sometimes transforms a charming, trim, tripping young lady into a waddling matron, whose every-day toilette suggests only the idea of a feather-bed tied round with a string. For my part, I do not believe that the summary banishment of the Graces from the domestic circle as soon as the first baby makes its appearance, is at all conducive to domestic affection. Nor do I think that there is any need of so doing. These good housewives are in danger, like other saints, of falling into the error of neglecting the body through too much thoughtfulness for others and too little for themselves. If a woman ever had any attractiveness, let her try and keep

it, setting it down as one of her domestic talents. As for my erring brothers, who violate the domestic sanctuary by tousled hair, tumbled linen, and muddy shoes, I deliver them over to Miss Jennie, without benefit of clergy.

My second head is, that there should be in family-life the same delicacy in the avoidance of disagreeable topics that characterizes the intercourse of refined society among strangers.

I do not think that it makes family-life more sincere, or any more honest, to have the members of a domestic circle feel a freedom to blurt out in each other's faces, without thought or care, all the disagreeable things that may occur to them; as, for example: "How horridly you looked this morning! What's the matter with you?" "Is there a pimple coming on your nose? or what is that spot?" "What made you buy such a dreadfully unbecoming dress? It sits like a witch! Who cut it?" "What makes you wear that pair of old shoes?" "Hollos, Bess! is that your party rig? I should think you were going out for a walking advertisement of a flower-show!" Observations of this kind between husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, or intimate friends, do not indicate sincerity, but obtuseness; and the person who remarks on the pimple on your nose is, in many cases, just as apt to deceive you as the most accomplished Frenchwoman who avoids disagreeable topics in your presence.

Many families seem to think that it is a proof of family union and good-nature that they can pick each other to pieces, joke on each other's feelings and infirmities, and treat each other without any offence or ill-feeling. If there is a limping sister, there is a never-failing supply of jokes on "Dot-and-go-one;" and so with other defects and peculiarities of mind or manners. Now, the perfect good-nature and mutual confidence which allow all this liberty are certainly admirable; but the liberty itself is far from making home-life interesting or agreeable.

Jokes upon personal or mental infirmities, and a general habit of saying things in jest which would be the height of rudeness if said in earnest, are all habits which take from the delicacy of family affection.

In all this rough playing with edge-tools many are hit and hurt who are ashamed or afraid to complain. And, after all, what possible good or benefit comes from it? Courage to say disagreeable things, when it is necessary to say them for the highest good of the person addressed, is a sublime quality; but a careless habit of saying them, in the mere freedom of family intercourse, is certainly as great a spoiler of the domestic vines as any fox running.

There is one point under this head which I enlarge upon for the benefit of my own sex: I mean table criticisms. The conduct of housekeeping, in the present state of domestic service, certainly requires great allowance; and the habit of unceremonious comment on the cooking and appointments of the table, in which some husbands habitually allow themselves, is the most unpardonable form of domestic rudeness. If a wife has philosophy enough not to mind it, so much the worse for her husband, as it confirms him in an unseemly habit, embarrassing to guests and a bad example to children. If she has no feelings that he is bound to respect, he should at least respect decorum and good taste, and confine the discussion of such matters to private intercourse, and not initiate every guest and child into the grating and greasing of the wheels of the domestic machinery.

Another thing in which families might imitate the politeness of strangers is a wise reticence with regard to the asking of questions and the offering of advice.

A large family includes many persons of different tastes, habits, modes of thinking and acting, and it would be wise and well to leave to each one that measure of freedom in these respects which the laws of general politeness require. Brothers and sisters may love each other very much, and yet not enough to make joint-stock of all their ideas, plans, wishes, schemes, friendships. There are, in every family circle, individuals whom a certain sensitiveness of nature inclines to quietness and reserve; and there are very well-meaning families where no such quietness or reserve is possible. Nobody can be let alone, nobody may have a secret, nobody can move in any direction, without a host of inquiries and comments. "Who is your letter from?

Let's see." "My letter is from So-and-So." "*He* writing to you! I didn't know that. What's he writing about?" "Where did you go, yesterday? What did you buy? What did you give for it? What are you going to do with it?" "Seems to me that's an odd way to do. I shouldn't do so." "Look here, Mary; Sarah's going to have a dress of silk tissue this spring. Now I think they're too dear—don't you?"

If there is perfect unreserve and mutual confidence, let it show itself in free communications coming unsolicited. It may fairly be presumed, that if there is anything our intimate friends wish us to know, they will tell us of it—and that when we are on close and confidential terms with persons, and there are topics on which they do not speak to us, it is because, for some reasons, they prefer to keep silence concerning them; and the delicacy that respects a friend's silence is one of the charms of life.

As with the asking of questions, so with the offering of advice, there should be among friends a wise reticence.

Some families are always calling each other to account at every step of the day. "What did you put on that dress for? Why didn't you wear that?" "What did you do this for? Why didn't you do that?" "Now *I* should advise you to do thus and so." And these comments and criticisms and advice are accompanied with an energy of feeling that makes it rather difficult to disregard them.

Now it is no matter how dear and how good our friends may be, if they abridge our liberty and fetter the free exercise of our life, it is inevitable that we shall come to enjoy ourselves much better where they are not than where they are; and one of the reasons why brothers and sisters, or children, so often diverge from the family circle in the choice of confidants is, that extraneous friends are bound by certain laws of delicacy not to push inquiries, criticisms, or advice too far.

Parents would do well to remember in time when their children have grown up into independent human beings, and use with a wise moderation those advisory and admonitory powers with which they guided their earlier days. Let us give everybody a right to live his own life, as far as possible, and avoid imposing our own personalities on another.

If I were to picture a perfect family, it should be a union of people of individual and marked character, who, through love, have come to a perfect appreciation of each other, and who so wisely understand themselves and one another that each may move freely along his or her own track without jar or jostle;—a family where affection is always sympathetic and receptive, but never inquisitive; where all personal delicacies are respected, and where there is a sense of privacy and seclusion in following one's own course, unchallenged by the watchfulness of others, yet withal a sense of society and support in a knowledge of the kind dispositions and interpretations of all around.—*Mrs. H. B. Stowe.*

Narratives, Anecdotes, &c.

THE PRAYER AT THE CRADLE.

A little cottage stood on the outskirts of a thriving country town. Over the windows and over the doors were the scarlet pendants of the prairie-rose, brighter than jewels, rich with diamond dewdrops, lustrous in each leaf with the warm kisses of the sunshine. A picture that made that little corner a bit of paradise, for within sang a young mother, bending over the cradle of her firstborn.

It was a girlish face, scarcely nineteen summers old—a face of gentlest motherhood—blended red and white, with a touch of brown that made it in harmony with its surroundings, the dark hair put plainly back, the lips smiling unconsciously, the eyes almost holy in their softened glance as they

rested on the beautiful boy before her, whose white lids drooped and then fluttered back, a baby laugh leaping out before they settled again to seeming slumber—and little fingers quivering.

These were the treasures of a hard-working man—a man whose shoulders had borne the burden of honest toil from his childhood; a man who feared God, and loved him with great outgushings of love that swayed all his soul when in his hours of happy rest his wife sat by his side, and their boy nestled against his broad, true bosom. He had gone forth that morning, fortified with prayer; strong in the faith that the mighty God he served would keep him and his from all harm.

The breath of summer stirred the leaves to music, and gave a voice of melody to all the streams. It touched the tangled hair and brow of a man who came sullenly along the lonesome road. His black brows met ominously. The strong lines of his face deepened the savage—or hopeless—expression of his countenance. One hand grasped his slouched hat and nervously doubled it till its shape was lost. Some horrible thought whitened the vindictive lips. "*Lost! Lost!*" was the handwriting upon that strange face. O was there no loving angel that yet stood by that miserable man? No arm tender and strong to draw him from ruin? No lip of sinless purity to whisper a warning?

"No," he cried, hissing the word to empty air—"no one cares for me! why should I try? I'll make a covenant with hell, and"—He flung his cap, with an oath, fiercely into the dusty road, drew his breath hard as the sight of the little cottage gleamed upon him, then, stooping, he picked up the hat and crept up stealthily towards the cottage.

"I'll steal," he muttered; "I'll be the outcast men would make me; I'll go headlong to ruin, body and soul."

At that moment his eye caught sight of the babe and its mother. Her voice, strangely sweet with long-forgotten music, came to where he stood.

"Sleep, baby; sleep, mother's darling; shut the blue eyes. There, he is gone. How beautiful! little angel!" Then she stooped and kissed him, and murmured, after a long, yearning look, —"O Father! when my baby is a man keep him so pure that he will never lose the beauty of his soul."

The listener staggered forward—the crumpled hat was under his eyes, wet with hot, blistering tears; the rugged form quivered with passionate sobs.

"O God!—and I—was once a child like that—my mother bent over me so—and—perhaps she prayed for me."

A timid step—a low, quick cry. Who was this terrible stranger? She stood there awed as well as frightened, for he still wept.

"Madam—I—I—am hungry—and very tired; will you give me something to eat? May I sit down on your door-step?"

She brought him food, and, pitying his tears, made him go into the little parlour. All the wild vengeance of one hour ago was dead within him. Soothed by the quiet, he fell asleep; slept till the toiler came to his homely dinner—to his wife and child. And then he told his story.

"I was a desperate man this morning. I have tried to be honest, but I have been in prison, and men brand me. Your wife, though she did not know it, killed the evil in my heart this morning. I was nearly lost again; I could not beg, and when people asked me questions I could not lie, for I had said, I will be honest, there shall be no half way about it. But when I told the *truth* I was turned off coldly from everywhere but here. I ask you, for God's sake, to be my helper."

And the prayer, the tears, were not in vain. I could show you the picture of another cottage—where roses, and peace, and love grow together!—but who would see in the man seated behind his own vine, the wretched vengeful traveller of that summer's day?

EASY TO HURT A MINISTER.

In a town in Connecticut, not a hundred miles away from New York, there lives a very estimable young minister. We have known him ever since his new birth (almost a quarter of a century). He has a very interesting young wife, with whom he lives most happily.

One fine Monday morning Mr. C—— takes some pains to announce, most confidently, that he and his wife saw or heard, through the window of this young minister's house, a most scandalous scene. To be quite sure, he

approached the house by the garden wall, and saw a strong light, and heard him beat his young wife in the most brutal manner. He not only saw something, but he *heard*. What did he hear? He heard her exclaim, "O murder! murder! Stop, you will be the death of me and my children." This was several times repeated. There could be no mistake about it.

This story was "going the rounds." It, of course, reached the ears of the officers of the church. They called to see the young minister, who was a stranger among them. They thought it possible that they had been "taken in." They could not tell him that they had heard such a report. The offence was too gross. They asked him about last Sabbath evening. They heard that Rev. Mr. ——, of a neighbouring parish, had spent the night with him, and that till a late hour they had sat up, engaged in pleasant conversation, and that the wife said to be beaten had retired early. They visited the minister who had been his guest, and received the same account.

Puzzled to know what all this meant, and determined to know the truth, these gentlemen again called on their minister, and then upon their informant. Finding him still very confident, they returned and told their pastor the whole story. They found that the minister and his excellent wife were only astonished and indignant. It was proposed at once to proceed to the house of the informing neighbour. They did so, and were astonished to find their informants still insisting upon it that it was all true; "they had seen with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears." It was impossible to be mistaken. They were good, honest, religious people, and could not lie.

What was to be done? Our minister and his wife deny; neighbour —— and his wife affirm. The latter has no interest in their denial. There was no alternative but to deny, and wait for providence to vindicate the innocent. At length, it happened that our clerical friend remembered that he was telling his companion (the neighbouring clergyman who was spending the night at his house) a somewhat tragical story, when, suiting the action to the word, he stood up as if he were acting the scene, and uttered the exclamation of terror and alarm which had been heard at a distance by this eaves-dropping neighbour, and had made the foundation of this scandalous report. *And that was all.* And yet the mischief had been done; and it was not easily undone.

The scandal-loving public had heard that the Rev. Mr. B—— was caught flogging his wife! It was quite too good a story to be so easily spoiled, and *many believe it still.* They quote it too, sometimes, thus: "I guess that was all true, after all;" or they say, "That's the man that flogged his wife." If some one suggests, "Was not that thing explained?" the reply is, "Something was said about its origin in some story-telling, but I do not believe it."

Thus for a decade this foolish story will, to some extent, injure the usefulness of our young friend. It is the easiest thing in the world, especially in the country, to injure a minister. Prejudice often, like a coat of mail, sheathes the hearer of religious truth. The finest logic, the most faultless rhetoric, fails to give penetrability to language, which falls like "rain on a duck's back." He who is fortunate in his antecedents, and chances to own the right form of language, can get a modicum of truth between the joints of the harness; but for the want of a little philosophy, many lose the benefit of the minister's labours. It is the fault of the hearer, and his loss too.

We are reminded of another incident, in another parish in the same State, that occurred some years ago: The good people were shocked to learn that their minister had been seen to chase his wife round the room one fine morning with a pair of tongs. While the poor woman endeavoured to escape, the man with great ferocity pursued her, and beat her unmercifully with a pair of iron tongs. The poor woman was very much terrified; she cried and screamed, and ran out into an adjoining room, while her pursuer followed, greatly excited, constantly repeating his blows.

All this was seen by several excellent people who would no sooner tell a lie than the minister. How could they be mistaken?

It turned out that a rat under his wife's skirts was the cause of all the scandal. The husband's exertions, the tongs, the blows, the retreat, the pur-

suit, were all explained, and, by the considerate, accepted as a solution of the mystery. Some, to this day, associate with this man of God the tongs and wife-beating.

MORALS.

1. It is easy to hurt a minister.
2. You cannot wholly undo the wrongs of hasty representation.
3. Be very slow to believe that those who have earned your confidence beforetime, do not deserve it still.
4. Hold yourself always open to conviction.
5. Be careful that prejudice does not make up your opinions, instead of reason.
6. Always express yourself most cautiously, when speaking of individuals. —*N. Y. Evangelist.*

PARENTAL PRAYERS ANSWERED.

In all my ministerial life it has been a constant source of delight to me to see how parental prayer has been answered. I have known family after family where, without exception, the whole have been brought to God, and are now walking in all his commandments blameless. I have known instances where there has been a long deferment of the hope, but where God has made good his word after all, sometimes even when the father and mother have been among the sainted ones in glory. I remember a group of nine of us gathering, in my early life, at a prayer-meeting; seven of us on comparing notes had to attribute our conversion to our mother's influence and prayer; and five out of the seven were fatherless boys, of whom I was one. I say to widowed mothers in this meeting to-day, Be of good comfort, my dear friends; there is a special blessing to the fatherless and the widow, and that blessing has never been manifested more signally than in the answer to maternal, widowed prayer for the conversion of beloved sons. I know a man now living in a green old age in Yorkshire, who, as a boy, was brought up in the fear of God, but seemed to be utterly unaffected by it. He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. At last he determined to run away from his mother, and nobody could tell how it was, except that God's hand was in it; but when he made up his bundle of clothes to take with him, he must needs put into it one of those square, old-fashioned Bibles which we used to have as presents in our childhood. He hid himself away in a ship at Bristol, and did not show himself to the captain till they were out into the Channel, and it was too late to send him ashore. He went to the Mediterranean. It was at the time of the wars with Buonaparte, and he was pressed on board one of the king's ships. He went on for years in the most entire ungodliness, his poor mother having given him up for lost. One day he was ill, and all at once bethought himself of his old Bible, which he had not seen since he had been on board that ship; he read some of the passages which his mother had marked, became a converted man, came back to England, became first a minister of Christ, and then the tutor of a college; and his name now is as fragrant ointment to multitudes among us who know what that man's character is. If he were here, he would, with stammering tongue—for he is very aged and full of infirmities—make you understand what he owes to his mother's prayers, to which, as he has declared to me hundreds of times, he attributed his conversion. Another case, and I shall have done. A man well known on our London stage, not only as a dramatic author, but as a man of high pre-eminence in the dramatic art and practice, and who, thirty years ago, was in this metropolis running an entire round of riot and revelry, told me, after he had become a preacher of Christ's Gospel, that through all those years of riot and revelry in connexion with the stage and the green room at Covent Garden and other places, he always heard his mother's voice ringing in his ears. Her very words and the tones of her voice came to his recollection, and he was fairly followed by his mother long after she had gone to heaven. It ended in his conversion, and he bade me tell all men that that life of his had been continually deteriorating his moral nature; and he also bade me tell all mothers never to despair of an ungodly son, even if he should take to the boards, but to pray on, hope on, and believe on. Encouragement! There is the amplest and richest encourage-

ment for all who will recognise their dependence upon God, who will earnestly seek for the blessing, and whose example and influence at home shall be in harmony with that blessing.—*Rev. W. Brock.*

PRAYERFULLY DONE.

It may be feared that young Christians are not so diligent as in former years, in distributing tracts as a means of good. Many conversions may be effected by such an agency, and some of them occasionally come to the knowledge of the distributor, as in the following incident:—

A minister was entertaining at his table another zealous minister of God, a young man now very useful in France. He was desirous of knowing how his young friend had been led to Christ, as he had said that both his feelings and studies had kept him, for many years far from the way of peace.

"The first impression made on my soul," said the young minister, "was, under God's grace, the effect of a small tract which I picked up from the highway side, near the village of Faong, in the Canton of Vaud, when I was returning from Germany."

"Did that happen," asked the master of the house, "in 1826, and in the last week in October?"

"Precisely," answered the minister with astonishment; "how do you know it?"

"Pray, were you dressed in a common travelling garb, with a knapsack on your shoulders, and a white cap?"

"Such was, indeed, my dress; but, again, how do you know it?"

"It was, perhaps, also, that tract entitled, *L'épi Glané sur le Grand-Route?*"

"It was, really: but I beg you to explain how—"

"I will tell you, my dear brother," said the minister. "I remember distinctly that at the foot of Faong hill, that very year, and the very week you speak of, as I was returning from Berne, I placed purposely, and with a prayer, the very tract mentioned, on the left side of the road, hoping that a young man, whom I saw coming at some distance, would find it, and receive a benefit from it. And I remember that, as I was at the top of the ascent, I looked back, and saw the traveller bending, taking, and immediately reading the tract, and then I prayed again to the Lord that he would bless the reading."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the young man; "how good is our Lord who prepared for us these spiritual ties; who has been pleased to show me my first unknown benefactor, and to encourage us to cast our bread upon the waters!"

A Page for the Young.

THE FIVE LITTLE RABBITS.

Once upon a time there were five little rabbits who lived with their father and mother in a nice house in a wood. It was not a house built of bricks and mortar, with doors and windows to it, such as you, my little readers, live in; but it was dug out underground, and was called a warren or burrow. They were all pretty and good tempered little rabbits, but all, except one of them, had one very great fault. They thought that they were wiser than their father and mother, and so they were not always obedient as good children ought to be. It was this fault that brought all their misfortunes upon them, as I will presently tell you.

One morning the father and mother of these little rabbits called them together, and said: "Children, we are going out to-day, and do not expect to be home till late in the evening. If you are good and obedient, and do exactly as we tell you, no harm can happen to you; but if you are naughty and will not mind, you will surely be sorry for it."

They all promised to be very good and obedient, and their father went on with his directions:

"You must not, on any account," said he, "go further away from home than the large oak tree on one side and the little beech sapling on the other. You must run into the house at the slightest noise you hear, without waiting to find out what has caused it; and you must not have anything to say to strangers, nor let any one scrape acquaintance with you. I need not tell you not to quarrel with each other, for that is something you never do; but I must warn you, Fatty, not to make yourself sick by eating too much; and you, Frisky, must try not to forget every word I have said before your mother and I are out of sight." The little rabbits promised again to do just as they were told, and their father and mother kissed them good-bye and left them.

When the little rabbits found themselves alone, they ran out of doors and began to chase each other around upon the soft, green grass. They played very happily together for some time, and then Frisky and Spotty challenged their brother Bunny to race with them as far as a fallen tree a little distance beyond the beech sapling. "I will run as far as the sapling," said Bunny; "but I cannot go any further, because papa told us not to do." "Nonsense," answered Frisky, "the sapling is so near that we could reach it in three jumps. *That* is no race." "It is as far as I can go," said Bunny, "and I wish, my dear brother and sister, that you would stay with me." But Frisky only laughed at him, and Spotty promised to come back as soon as he had reached the fallen tree. So off they started, while poor Bunny stood and watched them, with the tears in his eyes.

In a few minutes they reached the tree, Spotty having won the race. *He* turned back, but Frisky began to play in some long grass which was there, and Bunny and Spotty soon lost sight of her.

In the meanwhile Bunny's favourite sister, Pinkeye, had stayed quietly beside Fatty, who was nibbling a piece of apple, which a little boy, who had passed with his father the day before, had dropped there. Bunny was very glad to see how good and quiet they were, and when Fatty asked him to come and taste her apple, he thanked her, but said that he did not want any, because it was so soon after breakfast. "And take care yourself, sister Fatty," said he, "or you may be ill again, as you were last week, and have to take more of those nasty bitter leaves that you disliked so much."

"Oh, I will be careful," said Fatty, as well as she could speak with her mouth full. "I am big enough, I am sure."

"You certainly are the largest of us all," said Bunny, good humouredly, "and I did not mean to interfere with you; but indeed I am afraid that that piece of stale apple is not good for you. Come and play with Pinkeye and me for a little while."

"Don't bother me," replied Fatty. "You know I don't like to be disturbed while I am eating."

So Bunny let her alone, for Fatty, though not actually cross, was not so good-natured as any of her brothers and sisters, because she was generally uncomfortable from having eaten too much.

Just then Spotty came running up in a state of the greatest excitement.

"What do you think?" she said; "there is a horrid man on the other side of the great oak, and I know he is in some mischief, he is so quiet. I wonder what he is doing!"

"Nothing that concerns us," answered Bunny, "since he is on the other side of the tree. Let him mind his business and we will mind ours. If he comes near us, or makes any noise, we must run home, as father told us. You know what a gun is, Spotty, for you saw a wicked man kill a poor little bird with one yesterday. Has he a gun with him? if he has we must run in at once."

"Oh, no!" replied Spotty, "he has no gun; he has a strange-looking thing, like nothing that I ever saw before, which he hid away in the grass. I wonder what it is! Suppose we go and see as soon as he goes away!"

"Indeed I will not," said Bunny; "for father told us not to go beyond the oak tree on any account."

"Well, I will," said Spotty. "I lost my fun to please you once to-day, and I don't mean to do it again."

Now Bunny was no older than his brothers and sisters, and his parents had not told him to try and keep them in order, so he did not say any more,

though he felt very sorry when he saw how obstinate Spotty was. Spotty always was meddlesome and fond of prying into other people's affairs, and his parents had often told him that he would get into trouble if he did not break off this bad habit.

Fatty had now finished her apple, and was looking around for something else to eat. She saw some bright, glossy leaves, growing on a sort of vine, which clung to the trunk of a tree near her.

A pretty little black and white dog, with curly hair, and long ears and tail, now came running up, and asked the little rabbits to let him play with them for a little while.

"I will not hurt you," said he. "In the first place, I am not a hunting dog, and in the next, I am too little to do you any harm, even if I were. You may believe what I say, for dogs always tell the truth."

"I know that," said Bunny. "Father and mother have often told me so; and I should love to play with you, but I cannot to-day. Come and see us to-morrow, when our parents are at home, and, if they are willing, I should be delighted to have you for a friend, for I know by your looks that you are good, and I love you already."

"Then let him stay and play with us now," said Pinkeye. "Do stay, pretty little dog, and if brother Bunny is afraid of you, I am not."

"I am not afraid of you, little dog," said Bunny, "but I must not break my word." And, so saying, he ran away into the warren, so that he should not be tempted any more.

He stayed there for some time, when he heard the little dog barking and crying, as if he were in the greatest distress.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" cried the little dog, as soon as he saw Bunny. "What shall I do? What shall I do?"

"What is the matter?" asked Bunny.

"I don't know," answered the little dog, whose name was Tiny, "but I am afraid I have killed poor Pinkeye. We were playing very happily together, and I gave her, in fun, a tiny little bite on the back of her neck, and she fell right down, and I can't make her move. You don't know how sorry I am. Indeed I did not mean to hurt her. I would not do so for the world."

And poor Tiny began to cry and howl again.

Bunny did not know what to do, he felt so sorry; and he sat down beside Tiny, and cried too. He had no handkerchief, so he took a large plantain leaf and wiped his eyes on that. All at once he remembered that, if Pinkeye was not really dead, this was not the way to help her, so he and Tiny went to look at her. There poor Pinkeye lay, cold and dead.

Bunny and Tiny sat crying over her for a long time, and then Bunny began to wonder what had become of his brother and his other sisters. But he could not go and look for them without disobeying his father, so he asked Tiny to go instead. Tiny was very glad to be able to do anything to oblige him, so he ran off at once; but for a long time he could not find any of them, though he looked for them in every direction. At last he went to the other side of the oak tree, where you remember Spotty had gone to see what the man was doing. Poor little fellow! he had found out to his cost: for there he was, caught in a trap; and in his struggles to get out he had hurt himself so badly that he was breathing his last when Tiny found him. He had only time to send his love to Bunny, and to say how sorry he was that he had not taken his advice, when he fell over on his side and died.

Tiny knew that it would make Bunny still more unhappy than he was already to hear of Spotty's fate, so he thought that he would go and find Frisky and Fatty first, so that he might have some good news to carry; but when he did find Fatty, she was lying dead too, at the foot of the tree on which grew the vine whose leaves she had been eating. It was a poisonous vine, and she had paid the great penalty of her gluttony with her life.

This was too much for Tiny, so he ran back to Bunny, without waiting to look for Frisky, and told him how badly his poor little sister and brother had fared. Bunny cried again when he heard it, and Tiny sat down beside him and howled in the most dismal manner.

At last Tiny told Bunny that he would go and look for Frisky.

"Where did you see her last?" he asked Bunny.

"In that long grass yonder," answered Bunny, pointing out the place.

"Very well; I will do my best to

find her," said Tiny. "If I do not, it will not be for want of looking. Good-bye!" and off he ran, leaving Bunny alone again.

"Bunny!" said a little voice overhead.

Bunny looked up and saw a little robin sitting and swinging on a branch of the oak tree.

"Did you speak to me?" asked Bunny.

"Yes," said the robin, putting his head on one side.

"What have you to tell me?" asked Bunny.

"Tiny will never find Frisky," said the robin. "I saw a great ugly wild-cat who was prowling around, kill her and carry her off."

Bunny would not believe the robin at first, for he could not bear to think that all four of his brothers and sisters were dead through their own faults; but when, after waiting a long time for Tiny, he saw him come back alone, he ran into the house without waiting to hear his news, for he could tell by the way his tail was hanging between his legs that he had been unsuccessful.

When Bunny's father and mother came home, they found him sitting by himself in a corner, and looking very disconsolate. "Where are your brother and sisters?" asked his mother, who had been looking round anxiously for them ever since she came in. Poor Bunny could only answer by his sobs. "Is anything the matter with them?" she continued, becoming more alarmed every moment.

"They have been disobedient, and have got into trouble, have they not?" asked his father.

But still poor Bunny could not answer, and his father and mother were growing more and more anxious and impatient every moment, when they heard a gentle bark at the door, and when the father went to see who it was, there stood Tiny.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Rabbit," said he, "for intruding upon you; but I knew that poor Bunny would not like to tell you how good he was himself, and how naughty his brother and sisters were while you were away." So then he told the whole story himself, and Mrs. Rabbit came and listened too. When he had done, they called Bunny, and told him not to grieve any more, and said that they had rather have one good child like him than twenty naughty ones; and so, as it is not the nature of rabbits to fret long about anything, they were soon all very happy again. Tiny stayed to tea with them, and Bunny was glad to find that his father and mother approved of the friendship between them.

After this, Tiny used to come every day and play with Bunny, always taking the greatest care not to hurt him, and by-and-by, when some more little brothers and sisters were born, their parents used to tell them to mind Bunny, and follow his example in everything, and you may guess how happy this proof of their confidence made him, and how careful he always was to try and deserve it.

Our Sunday Schools.

THE LOWLY CRADLE.

A SUNDAY SCHOOL ADDRESS, BY THE REV. JOHN TODD, D.D.

"Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger."—Luke ii. 12.

CHILDREN, you know that if you were to try to make a mill, or a carriage, you would go to work very differently from the way in which a man would; and you know, too, that while the *man* might finish his mill or carriage, *you* could not finish yours. The man would go to work very differently from the child, because he is older and wiser.

Suppose there was a large island far off in the ocean, full of people; and suppose these people had all become thieves, so as to rob ships, and kill all *in* the ships; and suppose that they were liars and drunkards, and were just as wicked as they could be! Now

how would some men deal with them? Why, they would send war-ships with cannon and powder and great balls, and guns and swords to fight them. The great ships might shoot down their houses and cities, and kill a great many people; and they might scare them, and make them promise to *do* better,—but this would not make the wicked people *feel* any better; they would still *want* to be thieves and to rob ships, and would do it, if they only dared.

Suppose, now, that some day, just at night, these people on the island should find a man floated on their shores, almost drowned,—because, in trying to get to them, his little boat had struck upon a rock, and been broken to pieces. They pick up the poor man, and find that he has no watch, no jewels, and no money which they can steal. He tells them that he has heard they are wicked, and he has come to teach them, and to tell them about God, and heaven and hell.

They laugh at him, scorn him, refuse to give him food or a bed; sometimes they throw stones at him,—sometimes tell lies about him; but the stranger never gets out of temper. He bears it all meekly, and watches with the sick, makes crutches for the lame, leads the blind, and takes the very poorest children, and teaches them in his school. When not in school, he is going about doing good, carrying medicines to the sick, comforting the sorrowful, and speaking words of kindness to all. By-and-by some of his scholars catch his spirit, and do just as he does; and *they* go and open new schools, and teach the same good teaching.

After a while, some of the islanders get very much out of patience to see these good things done, and so they get together and kill the stranger who has tried to do them so much good. But after he is dead and gone, it is found that those whom he instructed still have his spirit, and thus more schools are opened, till the poor islanders are all taught, and all see how wrong it was to be thieves and murderers, and how wrong it was to be cruel; and so they all become better people. They learn to work and earn their living, and they are sorry and ashamed when they think how they used to live and act.

Now this poor stranger had no cannon and no swords; yet he did what the war-ship never could do: *he made the people feel sorry for their sins.* He made them leave off being thieves because they feared God, and not because they were afraid of being shot. Which of these two ways do you think was the best?

When God does anything, he does not do it as men do. The people in old times knew,—for the Bible had told them so,—a long time before Christ came to this world, that he *would* come. Sometimes the Bible called him a "Star," sometimes a "Fountain," a "Sun," a "King," a "Prince," and sometimes a "Child," or a "Son." They knew that, as all the prophets spoke of him, he must be greater than any other prophet. They knew he was to do some *great* work—for his kingdom was to be an everlasting kingdom, and all kings and people were to bow down to him and serve him. And they thought that one of whom this was foretold, and who was to do so great a work, must be a great character.

And how did they think he would come? Why, they supposed that having his choice as to how he would come, he would want to do as other men love to do. Men love pomp and notice. An ambassador who goes to another country has a great war-ship to go on purpose to carry him. He has flags on the ship, and guns are fired, and it seems to be a great affair. We know that, if we build a bridge, we must have a great deal of timber, and a great many men to hew, and bore, and put it together; if we build a house, we must have men to dig the cellar, masons and carpenters, painters and window-makers, and a multitude of trades, to help in it. If we know that a man has a great weight to lift or a great work to do, we expect to see a very strong man. If we know that a man has done some great work, or is selected to do some great work, as Wellington was, we expect to see a very uncommon man. So the people thought that Christ would come in a very new way. Some, perhaps, thought he would come on the clouds of heaven, attended by angels, as he will come at the judgment-day. Some, perhaps, thought that he would come with chariots and horses of fire, as Elijah went up to heaven. Some thought that he would come as a great king,

with an army, and live in a palace, and have officers, and gold, and riches, and fine clothes. Some thought he would come as a general, and make war, and conquer armies, and thus make all people serve him. They knew of no way by which to raise up his kingdom, except to fight and make people afraid of his sword. So they used to think and talk about him before he came to this world. How little were their plans like God's plans!

On the wild hills of Judea, there were some poor men watching over their flocks of sheep by night. They built little watch-fires, it may be, to warm themselves and to scare off the wolves. They were good men, and knew, most likely, that a Saviour was coming to this world. It may be they were talking about it and praying about it together that very night, when suddenly the heavens seemed to open, and out of them flew a multitude of holy angels, singing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good-will toward men." The shepherds were afraid, but the angels told them not to fear, for a Saviour was born,—Christ the Lord,—good tidings of great joy which should be to all people!

Ha! the Saviour is born!—a thing of great joy to all people! Well, he must be in some palace, where they have officers and guards, and silver and gold in great plenty! But no! they must go,—not to Jerusalem, the great city, but to little Bethlehem; not to the palace of royalty, but to the stable! And there is *the lowly cradle*, a manger, for the greatest King and the most wonderful character that ever was born. There were no silk curtains, no marble floors, no beautiful pillars, no great officers of state, no long train of servants, no treasures of gold,—there was only a manger with a little babe in it, and his mother bending over him! The shepherds tell their story of having seen the angels; they believe this is the Saviour of the world, and that in that lowly cradle is the "Son that should be given," "the Child that should be born," and they fall down and worship him.

Did you ever think, children, how many things took place even while Christ was a babe, which would draw men to think about him? There was the story of the shepherds, which they would spread far and wide among the people in the country. Then the wise men came from the East, guided by a new star, and the star would be seen and talked about far and near. They came to Jerusalem, and went to the palace of king Herod to find the babe, and thus they made it known to all the rulers and to all the city. This made it known still more widely. Then, when his parents brought the babe into the temple, the wonderful speech made by old Simeon would be told all over the country. The good old man had waited and lived to see this babe, and he was now ready to die. Next we have a king who tried to kill the babe of the lowly cradle, and sent soldiers to Bethlehem where the child was born, and slew all the little ones under two years old, so as to be sure and kill the child Jesus; and this would be known all over the land. But Christ—the little child—was carried by night down into Egypt, and finally brought back again, and carried to Nazareth, a little place so small and so poor, they thought the king would not look for him there.

Thus the babe, the child that was born, though cradled in a manger, moved heaven and earth; —the angels, to sing and shout for joy; the shepherds, to hasten and worship him; the wise men, to follow the new star till it came and stood over where the young child was; the king and all Jerusalem, to be moved and troubled; the children, to be slain on his account; and even old age, to feel gladdened and joyful. Was there ever such a child? was there ever such a cradle? He might have come the child of a king, and have been rocked in a golden cradle, had he seen fit. He might have had the nobles of an empire to welcome him; but no! he came and occupied *the lowly cradle!* And why did he do so? I will tell you.

1. *That we might all look at his real character.*

Had Christ come as a king, or a general, or a rich man, men would have looked at him as they do at a beautifully-bound book. It is not the *reading*—the real value of the book—which they notice, but the gilding and the ornaments. So when men have great titles, and great offices, and great wealth, we are apt to feel that *these* things are very desirable. Had Christ come as such a one, we should all have

tried to be like him; and so his followers would all have tried to be kings, or generals, or great or rich men; but now, he who is most like Christ may be a poor man, and have no worldly glory. We have not to look at Christ through a gold cloak, nor to see the dazzle of epaulettes or swords; we have not to wait till he has put off the robes of state, before we see him. There is nothing between us and his beautiful character. We have not to ask whether it is the pure water that is so sweet, or the cup out of which we are drinking it, that makes it taste so good. How little did Christ borrow of earth in order to make men love and admire him! We do not know whether he was tall or short. We do not know the colour of his hair, the dress that he wore, the expression of his face; we do not know anything about him, except that he came here and was found in a manger, with no heart but that of Mary to thrill at his birth. He would be loved,—not for what he had of earth, not for the glory of a throne, nor the honours which he bestowed on others,—but loved for his own sake; for what he *was*, and *is*, and ever *will be*.

2. *He came by the way of the lowly cradle, to show the poor what they can be and do.*

The parents of Christ were very poor. The pictures all make Joseph to be walking beside Mary on an ass with the babe in her arms, as they fled to go down into Egypt; but I am not sure that it was so. I do not know but that they walked, and carried the infant in their arms. They were poor; and when they brought their little son into the temple, they brought the poor man's offering,—a pair of doves,—thus showing us that the poor man may bring his little child to God, and dedicate it to him; and that he will be just as acceptable as the man who has uncounted gold. Sometimes poor people say they cannot go and worship God on the Sabbath, because they have no clothes; and poor children sometimes say that they cannot go to the Sunday school, because they have not clothes good enough. This is not a right feeling. This is not like Christ. The clothes in which he was wrapped in the manger were, perhaps, of a very common kind; and when he was brought to the temple to be dedicated to God, he was not dressed in gay clothing. Nothing of this kind was needed to recommend him to God. And let me assure my little reader, that, if he has fine clothes and a beautiful home, and nobody trying to kill him, he is better off than Christ was, but he has no reason to feel proud. If he is poor, and has poor clothing, and lives in a poor home, let him remember that it was just so with Christ; and yet his parents gave him to God, and from his very birth they held him as something consecrated to God.

3. *Christ came to us by the way of the lowly cradle, to show us that we need be ashamed of nothing but sin.*

Christ was a poor man's child; and he was not ashamed of that. Joseph was a mechanic; and that was no disgrace. Christ was born in a stable, and cradled in a manger; and that was no disgrace. He was persecuted in infancy,—driven away from home; he had to flee out of his country; was hunted by the king and his soldiers; and that was no disgrace to him. There is no disgrace in poverty, or in trouble, or in anything but sin. "He knew no sin."

How differently do we sometimes feel! We think that it is a disgrace to be poor—to have no home—no friends! It *may* be so, if it was *sin* that made us poor, if it was *sin* that made us lose our friends. We ought to feel ashamed of sin and crime; but not of anything else. Those who will be clothed with shame and everlasting contempt are the wicked. Those of whom Christ will be ashamed are the wicked. Those who will be shut out from his presence and glory for ever are those who are wicked. Now, my little children, you may know whether you ought to feel ashamed. If you use bad, low, wicked words; if you are rude, unkind, cruel, and headstrong; if you are proud, vain, and overbearing; if you are selfish, covetous, envious or jealous of others; if you are profane or vulgar in manners or behaviour; if you are unkind to your brothers or sisters, or disobedient to your parents; then you have something to be ashamed of. Sin, in every shape and degree, is shameful; and it is the only thing that is so.

Children, will you not learn a lesson from *The Lowly Cradle?*

Our Associations.

THE GENERAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.—The ninety-sixth annual Association of the New Connexion of General Baptists was held at Lombard-street Chapel, Birmingham, in the week beginning June 18th. The attendance was encouraging. The proceedings commenced on the Monday evening with a devotional service, the Rev. E. Foster, of Wendover, presiding. Devotional services, at which also reports from the churches were read, were held on every succeeding morning at seven o'clock. At ten o'clock on Tuesday, the chairman, the Rev. T. W. Mathews, of Boston, took his place, and delivered the annual address, which was divided into three parts—namely, congratulations, solicitudes, and suggestions. The thanks of the Association were presented to the chairman for his wise and faithful counsels, and the address was ordered to be printed in the minutes. Mr. C. T. Bishop, of Nottingham, was re-elected vice-chairman, and the Rev. J. Cholerton, of Sutterton, assistant-secretary. The annual meeting of the Home Missionary Societies was held in the evening. On the Wednesday morning, at Circus Chapel, the Rev. T. Goadby, B.A., of London, delivered a most able and comprehensive discourse from Mark xvi. 15, for which the warm thanks of the Association were given to him, and he was requested to print it. In the afternoon the Rev. H. Hunter, of Nottingham, preached an earnest sermon from Rev. i. 18; after which the Lord's supper was celebrated, the Revs. J. Harrison and R. Kenney delivering brief addresses. In the evening the public meeting of the Foreign Missionary Society was held. On the Thursday morning the report of the College at Chilwell was presented. It was of a favourable kind. The Rev. J. Lewitt having resigned the office of secretary, the Rev. S. Cox, of Nottingham, was appointed as his successor. The Rev. R. Kenney, of Burton-on-Trent, read the Circular Letter, on "The Discipline of Christian Churches." Thanks were voted to the writer, and the letter was ordered to be printed in the minutes. The meetings were not closed till nearly ten o'clock on Thursday night. A spirit of Christian union seemed to pervade the whole of the sittings. There are some matters to which special reference may be made. It was decided forthwith to commence a "Chapel-building Fund." The rules were adopted, and a committee appointed to procure funds. A deputation from the United Kingdom Alliance read an address advocating the claims of the "Permissive Bill." Several addresses were also delivered by a deputation from the Birmingham and Midland Freedmen's Aid Association, after which it was resolved, "That this Association cordially approves the objects of the British Freedmen's Aid Associations, and commends them to the sympathy and help of the churches." A communication was also received from the secretary of the Baptist Union in reference to the enrolment of chapel deeds, and it was resolved that the circular should be printed in the magazine and the minutes. Dr. Burns was requested to write to the forthcoming Triennial Conference of Free-will Baptists in America. An interesting letter was read from the Rev. J. G. Oncken. The chairman was requested to reply to it, and also to write to the next Triennial Conference of German Baptist churches, unless some of the brethren should be able to go as delegates. The subject of home missions occupied considerable attention, and a committee was appointed to prepare some plan by which operations of this kind may be made more vigorous and successful. An address of congratulation and sympathy with the President and people of America was adopted, and ordered to be sent. The statistical returns are not complete, but there is reason to fear that there will not be much, if any, increase of numbers. Votes of thanks were heartily passed to the friends at Birmingham for the kind manner in which they had provided for the convenience and comfort of their guests during the week.

OXFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION.—The annual meetings of this Association were held at Cirencester, on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 30th and 31st. The Rev. S. Hodges, of Stow-on-the-Wold, was moderator. Business commenced on the Tuesday morning. In the evening of that day the Rev. J. Frise, of Fairford, preached a thoughtful sermon from Acts iv. 33. On the Wednesday morning, an early prayer-meeting was held, under the presidency of the Rev. S. Hodges, and at nine o'clock, the Circular Letter was read by the Rev. J. Allen, B.A., of Hook Norton; subject, "The Importance of some Minor Duties of Church Members." On account

of the practical excellence of this letter it was resolved to supply, if possible, each member in the associated churches with a copy. After devotional exercises, the Association sermon was preached by the Rev. G. McMichael, B.A., of Bourton-on-the-Water. It was an eloquent discourse founded on Joshua i. 8. In the afternoon, the letters from the churches were read; and an address by the Rev. A. W. Heritage, of Naunton, was delivered on their contents. A somewhat mournful tone pervaded several of the communications. After tea, a public meeting was held, the Rev. J. J. Brown presiding. Very appropriate addresses were delivered by the Revs. R. Arthur, of Coate; G. St. Clair, of Banbury; and A. Powell, of Milton. The interesting services of the day were concluded by the observance of the Lord's supper. The Rev. J. J. Brown presided, and the Rev. J. Stratford (Independent), and the Rev. J. B. Charles (Wesleyan), took part in the service. At the meetings for business several grants of money were voted to needy churches; and important resolutions were passed. The Baptist Union was heartily commended to the churches. The Rev. W. Allen, of Oxford, has resigned the secretaryship of this Association, much to the regret of his brethren. The Rev. C. J. Middleditch, of Blockley, has been earnestly requested to fill the vacant office. Friends of all denominations contributed to the success of the gathering by their kindness and hospitality. All the dinner and tea tickets for the ministers and messengers were paid for by a gentleman occasionally attending the Baptist chapel.

Cornwall Association.—On Monday and Tuesday, June 26th and 27th, the annual meetings of this Association were held in the Baptist chapel, Truro. On the evening of Monday, a sermon was preached to the young by the Rev. R. Sampson, of St. Austell. On the Tuesday morning a devotional service was held, the Rev. W. Page, B.A., giving an address. The business of the session commenced at ten o'clock, when R. Grylls, Esq., was chosen moderator. The committee appointed last year to mature plans for carrying on a home mission movement presented their report. After recommending grants in aid of two churches in the county, it proposed the immediate appointment of an evangelist to labour in the neighbourhood of Hayle and Marazion. The report, after much careful and thoughtful discussion, was adopted. Thus the Association is committed to the evangelistic movement, and a committee was formed to engage an evangelist and superintend the work. Resolutions were adopted in favour of the Bible Translation Society, British and Irish Baptist Home Mission Society, and the Freedmen's Aid Society. The next annual meeting is to be held at St. Austell, the Rev. W. Hayward to be the Association preacher, and R. Grylls, Esq., the writer of the paper. The Rev. J. Wilshire, of Penzance, was re-elected secretary, and Mr. Gutheridge, of Falmouth, was appointed treasurer, of the Home Mission Fund. In the afternoon a meeting was held, under the presidency of the Rev. C. Wilson, of Helston, when a valuable paper was read by John Freeman, Esq., of Falmouth, on "Church Organization." This was followed by the reading of the letters from the associated churches. The increase reported was eighty-six, clear increase sixty-nine. Addresses were then given by Messrs. Haynes, jun., and Gutheridge. The ordinance of the Lord's supper was then administered, Messrs. Sampson and Wilshire conducting the devotional exercises. In the evening the Association sermon was preached by the Rev. G. S. Reaney, of Falmouth, from Revelation i. 6. After divine service the friends retired to the school-room for supper, and at its close brief addresses were given by Messrs. Wilshire, Reaney, Page, and Parkyn. The services altogether were well attended, and all felt it was a day of joyful recognition and spiritual communion.

Intelligence.

DOMESTIC.

Scarborough.—Mechanics' Hall.—Services of a deeply interesting character have recently been held in the above place in connexion with the settlement of the newly-elected pastor of the church, the Rev. J. Lowitt, late of Stoney Street Chapel, Nottingham. On Lord's day evening, June 4th, a sermon was preached by the Rev. J. Acworth, LL.D., after which he suitably addressed the friends who wished to be associated together as a

church, and affectionately gave them the right hand of fellowship. The Lord's supper was then administered by the pastor, and several members of other Christian denominations accepted the invitation to join in the service. On Tuesday evening, June 13th, the recognition services commenced, when prayer was offered by the Rev. R. Bayly, pastor of the first Baptist church; and the Rev. H. Dowson, of Bradford, gave a very affectionate and impressive charge to the pastor. The Rev. E. Stevenson, of Loughborough, spoke in great faithfulness to the church, and Dr. Acworth concluded by prayer for the divine blessing on pastor and people. The next evening—Wednesday—the friends met together for tea, gratuitously provided by members of the church and congregation. Dr. Acworth took the chair after tea, and introduced the business by expressing his gratification on the occasion of the assembling, and his fervent hopes for the success of the enterprise of establishing another Baptist church in this rapidly increasing favourite watering-place. The Revs. E. Stevenson; W. T. Handford, of Bolton; S. G. Green, B.A., of Rawdon College; H. Dowson, of Bradford; and T. Clough, of Malton, spoke in kind and affectionate terms to pastor and people. Mr. Lewitt then related the circumstances which led him to accept the call of the infant church, and concluded by expressing his great anxiety to co-operate with all denominations in the prosecution of the work of Christ in the neighbourhood. The pleasure of the meetings was greatly enhanced by the presence of the Rev. R. Bayly and the Rev. R. Balgarnie (pastor of the Independent church), who both gave the right hand of fellowship to Mr. Lewitt, and in the most cordial and fraternal manner welcomed him as a fellow-labourer in the kingdom of Christ, and heartily wished him prosperity.

ABERDARE.—Services in connexion with the opening of Gadlys Chapel, were held on Sunday and Monday, July 2nd and 3rd, when sermons were preached to large congregations by the Revs. Charles Williams, Ystalyfera; D. Williams, Llangyfelach; John Evans, Abercanaid; C. Griffiths, Merthyr; T. E. James, Glynneath; and Mr. Jones, Cardiff. This chapel, together with two commodious dwelling-houses and school-room, has been built by the church under the pastorate of Dr. Price; but on Monday a new and a separate church was formed in the new building. It may be interesting to the reader to know that this is the seventh chapel and the sixth church established by Dr. Price and his church during his twenty years' ministry in Aberdare. When he came to Aberdare, twenty years ago, the Baptists numbered ninety-one members, and met in a small chapel in Penypound, where now stands the English chapel. Since then the original church and its minister have raised the chapels in Aberaman, Mountain Ash, the Welsh chapel at Aberdare, the English chapel at Aberdare, the commodious chapels at Ynyslwyd, and at Abernant, and last, the one just opened at Gadlys. During the same period Dr. Price has dismissed from his own church, originally of ninety-one members, the following members to form new churches in the above-mentioned places; viz.:—In the year 1849 there were dismissed to form the church in Aberaman, 121; in 1855, to Mountain Ash, 89; in 1852 and 1856, 58 and 81 members respectively, to form the English church; in 1862, 163 to form the church at Abernant; in the same year, 131 to form the church at Ynyslwyd; and now 140 more are dismissed to form the church at Gadlys; making a total of 784 members; and it is highly gratifying to the doctor and to his deacons in Calvaria, that the state of the mother church is as healthy and prosperous as ever. Before dissolving the connexion between the Gadlys church and himself, Dr. Price and the friends there had warmly invited Mr. David Davies, at present a student at Pontypool College, to assume the pastorate. He has accepted the invitation, and we understand that he will settle at Christmas next.

MINCHINHAMPTON.—Numerously attended and deeply interesting services, in connexion with the recognition of the Rev. H. A. James as pastor of the Baptist church, Minchinhampton, were held on Friday, June 23rd. In the absence of the Rev. W. Yates, of Stroud, the Rev. J. E. Cracknell, of Cheltenham, took the chair at the afternoon meeting. The Rev. R. Ayres, of Chalford, read the Scriptures and prayed. The Rev. W. Jackson, of Bilston, put the usual questions to the church and the pastor, and received very satisfactory and touching replies. The Rev. J. Webley, of Avening, offered the ordination prayer. The Rev. G. Rogers, theological tutor at Mr. Spurgeon's College, delivered a faithful and affectionate charge to the minister. The Rev. W. C. Taylor, of Uley, concluded the service with prayer. A public tea was provided, at which about 350 sat down at half-past five. The meeting in the evening was conducted under the presidency of the Rev. G. Rogers, who spoke of the universal esteem in which Mr. James was held at the college. The devotions were led

by the Rev. W. C. Tayler and Rev. H. Jones, Independent, of Uley. The Rev. J. E. Cracknell delivered a thoughtful and impressive address on the relations of the church to its pastor. The Rev. W. Jackson delivered a clear, earnest, and encouraging address on the relation of the church to the world. Kind and congratulatory addresses were also given by the Rev. J. Burrell, of Nailsworth (Independent); H. Whitlock, of Eastcombe; J. B. Brasted, of Tetbury; and J. Webley, of Avening. The pastor, the Rev. H. A. James, feelingly responded in words of fraternal love. It is gratifying to know that the labours of the new minister have been attended with a pleasing measure of success.

SOUTHAMPTON.—The memorial-stone of the new Baptist (Carlton) chapel, for the use of the church and congregation now meeting in the Carlton Rooms, Southampton, was laid by the pastor, the Rev. J. Collins, on Wednesday, July 5th, in the presence of a numerous company of friends of the cause. A hymn having been sung, the Rev. R. Caven offered prayer, after which the pastor proceeded to lay the stone in the usual manner. A bottle was placed in a cavity in the stone, containing a bill of the day, with some current numbers of periodicals, besides which were a copy of a local paper and a brief statement of the church's belief and present position, which was read before being enclosed. After the Rev. Mr. Sissons (Independent) had given a most suitable address, the proceedings were brought to a close with the doxology and benediction. In the evening a meeting was held in the Carlton Rooms, when the pastor took the chair in the place of A. Lamb, Esq., who was to have laid the stone, but did not, from certain local causes. Addresses were given by the Revs. H. Carlisle (Independent), G. Sargent (Wesleyan), R. Caven (Baptist), and the pastor. Collections were made in aid of the chapel, amounting, with donations, to £27 10s., besides which £56 were paid in of moneys before promised, making the total receipts of the day over £84. The amount now in hand for the chapel is about £1,050, towards £2,500, the estimated outlay. The chapel is to seat 700. It is expected to be finished by the end of the year.

SHEFFORD, BEDS.—On Sunday, July 2nd, the Rev. W. T. Whitmarsh delivered his farewell discourses to the church and congregation at Shefford, of which he has held the pastorate for five years. The evening service was very largely attended, every available spot, the chapel, school, and vestry, being crowded, and numbers then excluded. On the following day a farewell tea and public meeting was held, at which fully 600 were present. The neighbouring ministers, of all denominations, were present, and spoke feelingly of the ready co-operation Mr. Whitmarsh had always shown in assisting their respective churches, and of the regret with which they viewed his departure from the neighbourhood. The Rev. P. Griffiths, of Biggleswade, who presided, presented Mr. Whitmarsh with a purse of £24, the gift of his church and congregation; also with an address, signed by the deacons on behalf of the church, testifying to their love for him, to his great usefulness at Shefford, and praying for his future prosperity. We rejoice to learn that, during his pastorate, the church has grown threefold, the income doubled, the chapel greatly improved, and a new school-room and vestries built free of debt. On the 9th Mr. Whitmarsh entered on the duties of the pastorate of the church at Brixham, Devon, preaching two sermons to large congregations. Mr. Whitmarsh enters on his new sphere of labour with encouraging prospects of usefulness.

GRAFTON, NEAR STRATFORD-ON-AVON.—On Wednesday, June 28th, a new Baptist chapel was opened at Temple Grafton, near Stratford-on-Avon. The Rev. J. W. Todd, of Sydenham, preached an impressive sermon in the afternoon from Rom. xiv. 7, 8. After tea, a public meeting was held in a field near the chapel, which was addressed by the Revs. J. Reading (Wesleyan), of Bideford; S. Dunn, of Atch Lench; M. J. Evans, B.A. (Independent), of Stratford; T. H. Morgan, of Birmingham; J. W. Todd, of Sydenham; G. Robson, of Shipston-on-Stour; J. Hall (Primitive Methodist), of Stratford; R. Hall, J. Harwood, and Mr. W. Stephenson, also of Stratford. Devotional exercises were led by the Revs. J. Reading, J. Hall, and Mr. Jas. Cox, sen., of Shottery, near Stratford-on-Avon. Additional services were held on the following Sabbath, when sermons were preached by the Rev. M. Philpin, of Alcester, and R. Hall, of Stratford. The meetings were deeply interesting; congregations excellent. The chapel is very chaste and elegant for a village sanctuary, and capable of holding 200 persons. A spirit of hearing prevails in the village, which rendered necessary the erection of a place more commodious than their former house of prayer, which was overcrowded and much out of repair.

COLNEY HATCH, MIDDLESEX.—Services to commemorate the laying of the founda-

tion-stone of this chapel, were held on Thursday, the 9th July. In the afternoon, a sermon was preached by the Rev. John Offord, of Kensington, and in the evening a public meeting was held, presided over by W. H. Watson, Esq. From a statement presented to the meeting, it appeared that the erection of the chapel had been completed *below* the estimate by £12, a circumstance most unusual in chapel-building schemes. Since the opening of the chapel in January last, a Sunday school had been commenced; a conference of Sunday school teachers had been held, which was well attended by teachers connected with schools within a radius of four miles; and one public baptism had taken place. A total debt of about £800 (which included £200 lent by the Baptist Building Fund) was still owing. Earnest appeals were made by the chairman, the Revs. T. Hill, D. Russell, W. Robinson, E. Thomas, J. Mark, and J. Paget, Esq., and before the meeting closed, promises to the amount of £174 were given.

Spencer Place, London.—Special services in connexion with the jubilee of the above place of worship were held as follows:—On Lord's day, June 18th, sermons were preached morning and evening by the Rev. J. H. Cooke, of Southsea, formerly pastor of the church, and in the afternoon by the Hon. and Rev. B. W. Noel, M.A. On the following day a tea-meeting was held. After tea a public meeting took place, the chapel being crowded in every part. The Rev. Philip Gast, pastor of the church, presided. The meeting was addressed by the chairman, the Revs. J. H. Cooke, C. Bailhache, W. T. Henderson, W. Miall, J. Russell, C. B. Sawday, J. Hobson, J. T. Hall (Falcon Square Chapel), Alex. Hannay (City Road Chapel). All the speakers congratulated the pastor and church upon their present advancement and hopeful prospects. The pastor stated that during the first two years and a quarter of his ministry at Spencer Place no less than fifty-three persons had been added to the church. It was also stated that a committee had been formed to raise funds for building a new chapel, and that already they had in cash and promises £300. The services were brought to a conclusion on the Thursday evening by the Rev. Chas. Stovel preaching a truly eloquent and able sermon from Heb. iii. 6.

Prickwillow, near Ely, Cambs.—A series of deeply-interesting and well-attended services have just been held to celebrate the jubilee of this church. On Sunday evening, July 2nd, the pastor, the Rev. S. Nash, preached a powerful sermon to an attentive audience on the year of jubilee. On Monday evening, the 3rd, a jubilee prayer-meeting was held and well attended. On Tuesday, July 4th, an excellent sermon was delivered to a good congregation by the Rev. J. Keed, of Cambridge; and at five o'clock the same evening, a large company filled both chapel and school-room, while others were waiting in the gallery, and partook of tea. Immediately after the removal of the tables, the company assembled in the chapel, where a public meeting was held. After singing and prayer, Mr. E. Claxton, of Ely, was called to preside. The pastor gave a brief history of the church for the last fifty years. Afterwards, very earnest addresses were delivered by the Revs. T. Mee, of Isleham; J. B. Catton, of Soham (Independent); W. A. Claxton, of West Row; and J. Keed, of Cambridge. All present were profited and delighted. About £50 has been realized towards the erection of a house for the minister, very much needed.

St. Helier's, Jersey.—The opening services in connexion with the Baptist chapel in Jersey, which we announced a short time since had been purchased for the St. Helier's Baptist church and congregation, commenced on June 25th. The morning and evening services were conducted by the Rev. F. F. Medcalf, of Middleton, near Banbury; the afternoon service by the Rev. W. Tubb, Primitive Methodist minister. These services were well attended, as well as a prayer-meeting held in the morning at seven o'clock. Sermons were also preached by Mr. Medcalf on Lord's days July 2nd and 9th. This church was formed some nine months since, and at its formation was composed of nine members; since that time the scattered sheep have been brought gradually together, and it is pleasing to state that the number of members is now thirty-two, including five young persons whom Mr. Medcalf baptized on Tuesday, July 11th. Divine service has been conducted for the past six months in the Temperance Hall. Service is now conducted in the new chapel, which is a neat building in the centre of the town, and capable of accommodating 250 hearers. A debt of £180 still rests on the chapel, which, it is hoped, will be considerably diminished by the end of the year.

Old Meeting, Luton.—On Tuesday, June 20th, a very interesting meeting was held at the Old Meeting, Luton, on occasion of the completion of the seventh year of his pastorate by the Rev. Thomas Hands. Tea was provided at five o'clock,

the profits being devoted to the fund for the erection of a new chapel. At seven o'clock a public meeting was held in the large school-room. John Everitt, Esq., of London, presided, and, after a very able address, presented to the Rev. T. Hands, in the name of the church and congregation, a testimonial of confidence and esteem, consisting of thirty-four volumes of books. Addresses were delivered by the Revs. H. Ashbery (Baptist); J. Little (Wesleyan), of Luton; G. H. Davies, of Houghton Regis; and D. Gould, of Dunstable. The work of God has been very successful in this place during the past year. More than fifty persons have been added to the church during that time; the congregations fill the place, scarcely a single sitting being unlet at any time. It is expected that in August, at latest, the foundation-stone of a second chapel, to seat 1,200 persons, will be laid, with the prospect of its being completed and opened free of debt.

LYON'S HALL, ESSEX.—On Thursday, July 6th, a tea-meeting was held in a barn at Lyon's Hall, Great Leighs, Essex, beautifully decorated for the occasion by friends connected with the adjacent chapel, recently enlarged at the expense of J. Tritton, Esq., who also generously provided the tea, of which 275 persons partook. After tea, J. Tritton, Esq., took the chair. The Rev. G. R. Moore, of Terling, engaged in prayer. The large numbers assembled were then effectively addressed on behalf of missions by the Rev. J. Davis, secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, and J. Bion, missionary from India; but the speech that attracted the most attention, delighting the people by the graphic delineation of the route to the Holy Land, the scenery, and the customs of the people, was that of H. Tritton, Esq., jun., lately returned from Egypt, Jerusalem, &c., who was received with evident expressions of the love and affection in which every member of the family is held throughout the entire neighbourhood. A collection amounting to £6 5s. 5d. was made at the close, and the vast assemblage retired, delighted with all they had seen and heard.

TRINITY ROAD, HALIFAX.—This chapel having undergone a thorough repair, internally and externally, including a new roof, and various alterations, additions, decorations, and improvements, amongst which was the fitting up of a new organ, it was re-opened on Sunday, June 18th, when sermons were preached to crowded congregations, morning and evening by the Rev. W. Walters, of Newcastle (formerly minister at the chapel), and in the afternoon by the Rev. J. Drew. The organ was opened by Mr. John Whitewood, organist at the Pellon Lane Chapel, and special anthems sung on the occasion. On the following Tuesday evening, the re-opening services were continued, and the Rev. R. Mellor, of Liverpool, preached to a crowded congregation, after which a collection was made, which, with those of Sunday, made up a total of £31·4s. The total amount of expenditure incurred, including the organ, was stated to be upwards of £800, of which sum £400 had been promised by the members of the church and congregation.

LION STREET CHAPEL, ABERGAVENNY.—On Wednesday, July 12th, the members of the church and congregation of the above chapel assembled to present their pastor, the Rev. S. R. Young, with a testimonial of their respect and esteem. The idea originated at the time of the rev. gentleman's marriage. The testimonial consisted of a handsome gilt drawing-room timepiece, an electro coffee-pot, Conybeare and Howson's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul," Bushnell's "Christ and his Salvation" Trench's "Synonyms of the New Testament," and three volumes of Dr. Ellicott's "Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul." Mr. D. Jenkins, one of the deacons, occupied the chair. An address was read by Mr. Hopkin Morgan to the pastor, who suitably acknowledged the gifts, making reference to the changes which had taken place during his ministry of more than nine years, and warmly thanking his friends for the kind wishes contained in the address. Several of the members subsequently addressed the meeting, which was pervaded by the heartiest good feeling.

CHIPPERFIELD, HERTS.—On Lord's day, July 2nd, sermons were preached on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society, by the Rev. J. H. Hinton, M.A., morning and evening, to crowded congregations. In the afternoon, Mr. Osborne, of Regent's Park College, addressed the young in the stead of the Rev. W. Sampson, of India, who, on account of sudden illness, was prevented coming. On the following day, at five p.m., an enthusiastic meeting was held in the open air, on the Common, presided over by the Rev. E. Steane, D.D., of New House, in the stead of Robert Barns, Esq., prevented by illness. Earnest appeals on behalf of missions were made by the Rev. J. H. Hinton, M.A.; the Rev. W. Vincent, incumbent of Chipperfield; the Rev. W. Robinson, of Serampore, India; the Rev. W. Bayne, of Rickmansworth; the Rev. Mr. Green, of London. There were also present the

Rev. Mr. Bliss, the Rev. G. Ware, and the Rev. W. Fisk, the pastor. Collections, £26 18s.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE.—A very interesting meeting was held on Saturday evening, July 9th, in the school-room attached to the chapel in Welbeck Street in this town, on the occasion of the acceptance of the pastorate of the Baptist church by the Rev. James Hughes, of Pontypool College, with a view to welcoming him to his new sphere of labour. There was a full attendance. After the company had partaken of tea, the chair was taken by W. Allison, Esq., of Manchester, who delivered a very encouraging address. The Revs. W. Evans, of Stalybridge; G. Whitehead, of West Gorton; J. Barker and C. Farnsworth, of Dukinfield; T. Green, M.A., of Ashton; and R. E. S. Oram, Esq., of Dukinfield, also took part in the proceedings. Mr. Hughes, in feeling terms, addressed the meeting; and, after speeches from the deacons and other friends, the meeting, which was throughout of a cheering and gratifying character, terminated.

RIDGMOUNT, BEDS.—The Rev. T. Baker, B.A., of Ridgmount, Beds, has accepted the invitation of the church at Great White Chapel, Ramsey, near Huntingdon; and on Thursday evening, June 22nd, a meeting of the church and congregation at Ridgmount was held, presided over by the Rev. J. Andrews, of Woburn, at which a purse of gold was presented to Mr. Baker, accompanied by the warmest expressions of affection and esteem for his personal character and labours during his pastorate of eleven years, and with fervent prayers that divine blessings may abound towards him in his new sphere. Mr. Baker leaves Bedfordshire with the best wishes of his ministerial brethren, both Baptist and Independent.

MINISTERIAL CHANGES.—The Rev. W. C. Jones, of Warminster, has accepted the cordial and unanimous invitation of the church at Lymington, and commenced his ministry there on the first Sunday in July.—The Rev. T. A. Price, of Manorbier, has accepted a cordial and unanimous invitation to the pastorate of the English church at Aberdare.—The Rev. R. Stevens has just resigned the pastorate of the Baptist church at Bridport, Dorset, and is prepared to accept a call to any other suitable sphere.—The Rev. C. Deavin, late pastor of the Baptist church at Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, has accepted the very cordial invitation of the church at Fakenham, Norfolk, and has entered upon his duties.—The Rev. G. Taylor has resigned the pastorate of the Baptist church, Burnham, Essex, in consequence of protracted and severe affliction.—Mr. D. Morgan, of Pontypool College, has accepted a cordial and unanimous invitation to the pastorate of the English Baptist church at Usk.—Mr. Robert Speed, student of the Pastor's College, Metropolitan Tabernacle, has accepted the unanimous and cordial call of the church at Mill Street, Bedford.

GENERAL.

A CHRISTIAN SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE.—A prospectus for a new philosophical society has been issued. It contains the following:—"At the Anthropological Society of London, on May 26th, Bishop Colenso spoke of 'the facts of geology' as disproving the Scriptures; as if he had really not been aware that all the lately-assumed foundation 'facts' of geology have been publicly given up as untenable and disproved by Sir Charles Lyell. It will be the business of the new philosophical institution to recognise no human science as 'established,' but to examine philosophically and freely all that has passed as science, or is put forward as science, by individuals or in other societies; whilst its members, having accepted Christianity as the revealed truth of God, will defend that truth against all mere human theories by subjecting them to the most rigid test and criticisms. In fact, the society will be organized for the purpose of applying to 'science' somewhat of that vigilance to detect its errors, contradictions, and fallacies, which has been freely enough exercised in our day upon the statements of the Scriptures and of Christian doctrine by those who accept without the least examination, and with an almost absolute credulity, all that passes for science. Its head-quarters will be in London, but it will soon boast of corresponding branches throughout the whole country. Similar societies will be established on the continent and throughout the world, thus affording facilities for individual and combined co-operation, and also for reproducing each other's most important publications. The battle between the Scriptures and science will then be fairly fought—not any longer with all the organization on one side. Papers will be read before the society, discussing the most important questions of philosophy and science, without limit as to the subjects, except that those will be especially considered and have a preference that appear to touch adversely the basis of the Christian faith." We see that Mr. Burnand Owen, who advocated the cause of missions among the Anthropologists, is named as secretary *pro tem.*

THE COLYTON BURIAL CASE.—The Bishop of Exeter has delivered judgment in the case of the Rev. Mamerton Gueritz, vicar of Colyton, East Devon, against whom proceedings had been taken for refusing to read the burial service at the funeral of one of his parishioners, John Pavey, who had died in the Unitarian faith, but who had been baptized by a clergyman of the Church of England, and had never been declared excommunicate. The defendant having admitted the facts, the case was, by the consent of all parties, left to his lordship's decision, without any proceedings being taken in the Ecclesiastical Court. The Bishop, in delivering judgment, said it was a pleasant thing for him to find this matter so amicably adjusted. The Rev. M. Gueritz had acted discreetly in confessing that he had violated the canon of the Church; and the complainants (the relatives of the deceased) had very charitably disclaimed wishing to seek for any vindictive punishment. The defendant was not justified in his refusal to read the burial service at the funeral, but he thought the justice of the case would be met by admonishing the defendant, and expressing a hope that he would not so offend again. The defendant would have to pay all the legal costs in this proceeding.

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.—It will be remembered that some time since a prize of five pounds was offered by some friends in Wales for the best pictorial representation of the Baptism of our Lord. That prize was obtained by Miss Nutter, of Beech House, Cambridge. We have just received a lithograph of the drawing, in which we presume that justice is done to the work of the fair artist. The picture is a pleasing one, though of course it would not be proper to subject it to severe artistic criticism. The moment chosen is when our Lord and John are standing in the stream, before the actual baptism. We may add that the lithograph is published by Mr. W. M. Evans, publisher, Carmarthen.

Editorial Notes for the Month.

DURING the past month the country has been occupied with a General Election. The Parliament that was elected under the Government of Lord Derby, and that has survived nearly six years under the leadership of Lord Palmerston, was dissolved at the beginning of last month; and for a fortnight afterwards the whole kingdom was engaged in answering the question, to whom it would commit its destinies for the six years to come. We are thankful to say that the Liberal party has been placed decidedly in the ascendant, though we are at least equally thankful that the ascendency has been given to liberal ideas, and not to Lord Palmerston or any other leader. To no former Parliament has there been returned an equal number of able exponents of liberal principles—untrammelled by undue attachment to the Liberal party. In addition to Mr. Bright, Mr. Forster, Mr. Hadfield, Sir Morton Peto, and Mr. Baines, we have now Mr. Mill, Mr. Morley, Mr. Torrens, Mr. Hughes, and Mr. Fawcett; and, what is perhaps a greater triumph than all, we have Mr. Gladstone cut loose—in spite of himself—from the Ecclesiastical leading-strings of the University of Oxford. Never to our mind did the prospects of Liberalism appear more hopeful. No longer will the noble-hearted member for Birmingham stand practically alone. Even Mr. Disraeli has had to confess that "the danger to the country" lies in the increased strength which this election has given to Mr. Bright. In this fact, as we view it, and in the increased power which this election has given to the member for South Lancashire, lies the country's chief hope.

There is not much to be said this month about American affairs. The process of reconstruction and reorganization goes on apace, under the able direction of President Johnson, who, his enemies being his witness, is proving himself "the right man in the right place." The murderers of President Lincoln—or at least the conspirators of the murder—have suffered the penalty of the law. Four of them have suffered capital punishment, and four others have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment. The whole world justifies their doom. As to Jefferson Davis, nothing appears to have been decided. He still remains in the hands of his captors, though they appear more than ever disposed to use their power mercifully. Less conspicuous rebels are being pardoned by hundreds. The President seems to wish to pardon all whom he can pardon righteously. Slavery has been utterly destroyed. The supporters of the slave system are being treated individually with all possible consideration. We venture to think that the sneers at republican institutions—so far at least as they are pointed at America—have come about to an end.

No other "news" appears to call for notice this month. The only other matter to which we will allude in this page concerns ourselves, and will be found noticed elsewhere. These are the last words which the Editor of THE BAPTIST REPORTER will, in that capacity at least, write. He would it were otherwise. He could desire that a magazine which was conducted usefully and ably for so many years by Mr. Winks, and which, under Mr. Winks's direction, deserved so much esteem and gratitude, might have been deemed worthy, by the Baptist denomination, of larger support under his own management. But, in enterprises such as these at least, *vox populi vox Dei*. No Editor can afford to maintain publications which the public do not care to support. Henceforth THE BAPTIST REPORTER is amongst the things that were. The Editor is thankful that he can recall no line that he has written "which dying he would wish to blot." With much thankfulness to those who have aided him—with no feelings of unkindness to those who have withheld their aid—the Editor now, affectionately and respectfully, bids his readers FAREWELL.

J. HEATON AND SON, 42, PATERNOSTER ROW.

they felt no sympathy, and therefore he again scattered them; "wrath came upon them to the uttermost," and still it remains. They yet blaspheme the God of heaven, and repent not of their deeds.

But God's purpose still stands firm. One of the prophets who saw, mourned over, and reproved their wickedness, thus announces their future spiritual greatness and ministry of blessing: "But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord; men shall call you the ministers of our God." (Isa. lxi, 6.) Thus we learn that a sacerdotal character will belong to the *whole nation* of Israel, as distinguished from other nations, and as regards their actings towards them. This shall be discerned by other people, who shall gladly acknowledge it, as it is written by the same prophet: "They shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord" (Isa. lxii, 12); and again, "Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard *that* God *is* with you." (Zech. viii, 22, 23.) Other passages, as Isa. lxvi, 20, 21; Jer. xxxiii, 18; Ezek. xliv, refer to Priests and Levites and their several functions; but those passages above quoted refer to the entire *nation*, which shall then know the Lord, and seek to make him known.

But, before Israel enters on this high office of holy, priestly service, a terrible ordeal must be passed through, and a great change be wrought. Jacob has yet to pass through "his time of trouble" (Jer. xxx, 7); "the purifying fire must be kindled" (Zech. xiii, 9); the Spirit be poured upon them from on high (Isa. xxxii, 15), and the pierced One be manifested (Zech. xii, 10).

There is no doubt that the future of Israel, with all the details of rebellion, judgment, penitence, pardon, cleansing, and adoption, is as fully revealed in God's word, prophetically, as is their past in history. It is a most deeply interesting study; and a general view of Israel's future is necessary to a right understanding of God's word, and will prevent much misinterpretation and misapplication of Scripture, which is no small point gained; it will also lead to waiting on God for more light, and produce a deep sense of the depth of truth, and the feebleness of our understanding to fathom it.

Of one thing we may be quite sure, that the bitter course of trial and discipline to which Israel will be subjected, will issue in permanent blessing. In this there will be a difference compared with the past. The three brightest parts of Israel's past history perhaps are—the generation that went into Canaan with Joshua; the people who lived in the last years of David and the first years of Solomon; and those who were governed by the Maccabees. Now, consider what a process each of these classes had to pass through; before honour was humiliation, before dignity came discipline. Thus will it be when Israel shall be raised up to their future sacerdotal, national dignity. But there will be this difference: on all previous occasions, failure speedily succeeded prosperity. It shall not be so again. "I will," says God, "put my fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from me." "Thou shalt call me My father, and shalt not turn away from me." (Jer. iii, 19.) "Neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I have

poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. xxxix, 28, 29.) What God will make them then as a nation, they shall remain. They will be under "a new covenant," possess "a new heart, and a right spirit," yea, "*one* heart." Oblivious of self, they shall become mindful only of the glory of God, and the good of others. They shall inherit to the full "the blessing of Abraham"—"I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing." It must be so, for thus hath God spoken, "But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the Lord of hosts. For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel, so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong." (Zech. viii, 11, 13.)

But in what will the priesthood of Israel as a nation consist? It may be difficult to answer the question fully, as priesthood under any of its aspects is a deep subject. Even the heathen always connected mystery and the priesthood together. Who can study the typical priesthood established by God, without feeling this? Their dress, their ornaments, their work, their ministry, and its results, were all mysterious and sublime. It is much more so with the great Antitype. His person; his sacrifice (even "himself"); his intercession for his people; his presentation of them, bearing them on his heart, and the blessing which he bestows, have heights and depths, wonders and glories, beyond all human thought. In the Christian also, his separation for God, his ministry to God, his communion with God (even entering within the vail), there is also mystery. (1 Pet. i, 5; Rev. i, 4, 5; Heb. x, 18, 23.) And when we hear the elders and the "living ones" sing their anticipative song, and remember who they represent, we exclaim with wonder, What meaneth this? "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v, 9, 10.) What dignity and service, what joy and blessedness, do these words indicate!

But one thing is clear and evident—and this may assist in understanding what is meant by the future priesthood of Israel—the institution of priesthood has always had for its *one great object* the communication of blessing. This was the case with patriarchal and Jewish priesthood; and herein they stand out in glorious contrast with the result of the heathen priesthood (and may we not add the popish also?) which has always been an engine of oppression, a means of blinding and cursing. Every blessing comes to sinners and saints through the priesthood of Christ; there is no other channel for God's mercy and love to flow down by. Christians have been blessings just in proportion as they have realized their priestly character, and acted it out. But a mistake on this point is fatal, as Popery and Puseyism abundantly manifest. When the redeemed and glorified Church shall enter on its royal priesthood under Christ, the true Melchisedec, in the world to come, it will become indeed a channel of blessing beyond all we can conceive. And then Israel

as a nation will be a priesthood below, in whom God will fulfil this most gracious promise—"And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it: neither shall they visit it: neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart." (Jer. iii, 16, 17.)

The Apostle's exclamation, "How much more their fulness!" and "What shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead!" and many other passages too numerous to quote, show what a blessing Israel will then become. Their restored nationality, their happy condition, their holiness, will all witness to the nations of God's character, and herald forth the glory of his mercy, faithfulness, and holiness; while their beneficial and zealous testimony will be indeed a blessing to the world.

There are two things we would more particularly refer to in connection with their condition as a priestly nation, and in the exercise of which they will bring much glory to God and many blessings on man. These are *prayer* and *praise*. In many places the restored and sanctified nation of Israel are thus presented to us. We just refer to one of each class.

We have the prayer of restored Israel in Psalm lxvii:—"God be merciful unto us and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us: Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth: Selah. Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us: and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." What a contrast does this language present with the narrow bigoted mind of the ancient Jew, who said, "Come not near me," yea, with some Jewish Christians of apostolic times! (Acts xi. 3.) And all shall be made good. Every sentence in this Heaven-provided prayer shall be breathed out by pardoned Israel, and answered in the salvation of the Gentiles. When tens of thousands of Israelites pray like Moses and Elijah, and preach like Paul and Peter, then will wonders indeed be wrought; the windows of heaven will be opened, till there is not room to receive the blessing.

And then, when, in answer to Israel's prayers, the world is blessed, and "the earth yields her increase," the priestly nation, standing in the midst of the saved nations, shall summon them to the work of praise, and be the leaders of the melody. The following is the language they will then use:—"O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great towards us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord." (Psa. cxvii.) This is a most remarkable Psalm. It is the shortest in the book; it is said to be the centre of the Bible; it is quoted in the New Testament; and it contains a glorious prophecy of universal blessedness. Certainly both these Psalms are future, and must be literally fulfilled. How should these things make us long

intensely for the ingathering of Israel, and endear to us the sacred pages of prophecy! "Let us earnestly pray for Israel now, and seek to make known to them "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." Let us mourn over Zion's desolation, and sympathize with God in his merciful designs. Then shall we at last hear the God of Israel say, "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn over her: that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory." (Isa. lxvi, 10, 11.) Then how beautiful will the following glorious Psalm (which is now so much misapplied) appear, and how melodious will the blended voices of all tribes and tongues sound as they gladly respond to Israel's loving call—"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands; serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing; know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."

The Future and its Order.

(Continued from page 88.)

HAVING mentioned the principal events to be revealed in "the Future," we now proceed to inquire respecting their *order*. One thing we must be allowed to assume, having on other occasions endeavoured to prove the same from Scripture, which is, that the personal coming of the Lord Jesus will precede the Millennium, and will most assuredly introduce it. "He shall come whose right it is to reign;" and "He shall not fail nor be discouraged until he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law." But first there will be a time of fearful evil, when iniquity will abound, rebellion will be rampant, and "that wicked one will be revealed, whose coming is after the working of Satan." Without pretending to speak positively as regards the exact order of events, we consider that the things which must come to pass will be somewhat as follow:

I. As the result of great political changes which will be produced by principles now in operation, we expect to see ten kingdoms arise within the boundaries of the ancient Roman empire. These ten kingdoms will be found with the Mediterranean Sea for their centre, including parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. We are aware that many have taught that these ten kingdoms were developed ages ago. Such writers find them all in the western or European half of the Roman empire, thus leaving out Jerusalem and many more important places, and anomalously putting the ten toes on one foot of the great image. We believe that the whole empire, east as well as west, will be included in these ten divisions, and we think that for some years past

active preparations have been going on to bring this predicted division about. In proof of this we point to Egypt, Greece, Italy, and Turkey, and to what has occurred in these countries during the present generation. The writers who affirm that the ten kingdoms are all to be found in the west, are sadly at variance among themselves as to what kingdoms are intended, though this point ought to be plain enough if the prophecy is really fulfilled. Mr. Tyso exhibits in a tabular form twenty-eight *different* lists of the supposed ten kingdoms, as arranged by various writers on prophecy. The fact is, and in this we find one reason for all this confusion and contradiction, the western part of the Roman empire has been continually changing; now two or more kingdoms joining; then, one dividing into two or more. It has been asserted by one who has searched much into this subject, that the dominion of the Cæsars in Europe has never since its subversion, in the fourth century, up to 1860, been divided into less than fourteen, and sometimes into as many as twenty separate sovereignties. No wonder then at the differences of opinion in fixing specifically on TEN. There will be no room for doubt when the real and final division once takes place.

II. In connection with a political revival of the eastern portion of the Roman empire, and of the east generally, we may expect a partial return of the Jews to their own land. They will go there *as Jews*, not believing in the Lord Jesus, but in sympathy with the Gentiles as regards human progress and worldly glory. They will build a temple, not that described in the close of Ezekiel's prophecy, but one referred to in Isa. lxvi, 1, 2. In this chapter, and also in Zech. xiv, Joel ii, iii, and many of the Psalms, we have the closing scenes of their evil history described. They will establish Judaism in great splendour, with all its traditions and superstitions, and will ripen as a people for those judgments which will precede their final deliverance and blessing. Isa. ii, 6—22, describes their worldly glory and surpassing wickedness, thus fulfilling the Lord's prediction in Matt. xii, 43—45, concerning this "evil generation."

III. From the eastern or Greek part of the Roman empire we may look for the little horn, or the personal Antichrist to arise. He is to come forth out of one of those four divisions into which Alexander's kingdom was broken. (See Dan. viii, 9—12, with the explanation, 23—25.) This horn is identical with that in Dan. vii, and with the beast in Rev. xiii, as, we think, a careful examination and diligent comparison will clearly prove. That neither of these descriptions of the little horn, nor that of the beast in Revelation xiii, or of the man of sin in 2 Thess. ii, can apply to the Pope of Rome, we have endeavoured to prove in a previous paper on "Antichrist." (See vol. i, 84.) We just mention three points which ought to decide this question. Antichrist will "deny the Father and the Son:" all the popes subscribe to what is called the Apostles' Creed. Antichrist will reign over the *whole* Roman earth: no Pope has ever been acknowledged in any way by one-half of it. Every one who ever acknowledges Antichrist will be irrevocably lost. (2 Thess. ii, 11, 12; Rev. xiv, 9, 10.) Who would dare assert this of every one who at any time has acknowledged the popes of Rome?

IV. In connection with the domination of Antichrist, preceding and accompanying it, we may look for the most splendid triumphs of human skill, power, and greatness. We may also expect a most extraordinary

growth of commercial enterprise, which will for a time greatly influence and mould all governments. This system now fast developing will probably be seen in its full-blown glory in the same spot, "the plain of Shinar," where the first attempt of man "to get himself a name" was made. (See Zech. v, 11; Rev. xviii.) Antichrist, and the ten kings who will be federated under him, will at first patronize and use this great commercial system, but will afterwards oppose and put it down. (Rev. xvii, 4, 16.)

V. The progress and triumph of Antichrist will be accompanied by a bitter persecution of true Christians, who will not receive his mark nor worship his image. (Dan. vii, 21—25; Rev. xii, 11—17; Rev. xx, 4—6.) The Jews also, many of whom will acknowledge him, will greatly suffer at his hand. (Dan. ix, 27.) A remnant, faithful to the true God, though not converted to Christ, will be preserved through all this fiery trial.

VI. In the crisis of Israel's trouble, when they appear likely to be swallowed up, the Lord Jesus will come. Then the sleeping saints will be raised and the living ones changed. (Zech. xii, 10; xiv, 1—6; Rev. i, 7; Dan. xii, 1—3.) Then will come the destruction of Antichrist, the gathering out and burning of the tares, and the conversion of the spared remnant of Israel. These will be followed in due order by the binding of Satan, the gathering in of all Israel to their own land (Isa. lxvi, 20), the conversion of the whole nation, the establishment of a kingdom of righteousness and peace in the earth under the immediate government of Christ and his saints, who will be kings and priests unto God. The Millennium, even when fully established, will not be a perfect state; like all previous dispensations, it will end in apostasy. Then will come the judgment of the great white throne, to be succeeded by the new heavens and the new earth in all their perfect and changeless glory.

It may be objected to the order of events above suggested, that this view puts off the personal advent of Christ for a long time, and that thus we fall into the same error we condemn in the Post-Millennialists. To this we reply: That it is a widely different thing to assert that a thousand years, or an immensely long period symbolized by that term, must certainly come and pass away before Christ comes; and merely saying that certain events clearly predicted in Scripture must first take place. Moreover, the events which we expect may come very soon, and may follow each other with amazing rapidity. A time of crisis like that of the last days will be one of fearful activity. As matters of fact, we know that the apostles foretold events to transpire *before* the Lord should come, and yet always exhorted the saints to watchfulness, and to take a right attitude as regards this oft-predicted advent. (2 Thess. ii, 1, 2; 2 Pet. iii, 1—10.) In thus acting they were no doubt influenced by the teachings of their Lord, who when on earth spoke of the period of his absence as one of considerable duration, though, as compared with the eternity to follow, it would be but "a little while." The Lord also speaks of the events which he foretells as *signs* of his personal appearing, showing when they once "begin," that "He is nigh, even at the door."

Again, is there not *a great difference* between saying that certain events which are chiefly of an *evil nature* will occur before the Lord comes, and saying that the time of earth's great blessing will *first* come and pass away? A belief that until the Lord comes evil will prevail, and that "that wicked

one will be revealed," will only make the Lord's coming the more to be desired. But how different the case of those who put the Millennium before his coming! How is it possible for *them* to desire or wish him to come now, or even very soon? We do not, we cannot *hope* for Antichrist, nor *desire* the days of tribulation; but we may and do hope for the Millennium, ever praying "thy kingdom come." But when Christians do this, and at the same time place this Millennium *before* Christ's coming, they practically and substantially wish the personal coming of Christ delayed. Whereas we who believe the *order* to be that the present state of things will ripen into open rebellion and apostasy, that Christ will come to judge this evil, destroy Satan's works, and establish his universal kingdom: we can desire the Lord "to finish the work and cut it short in righteousness;" we can *consistently* pray in the same breath, "Come, Lord Jesus," and, "Father, let thy kingdom come!"

* We are aware that some try to meet this objection by teaching a secret coming of the Lord; which teaching we believe is nothing more nor less than adding something to God's testimony. Such also teach that there will be a period of many years between the Lord's coming *for* his people, and his coming *with* them, a distinction absolutely necessary to support a novel human system, but at complete variance with the many passages of Scripture which refer to the "coming," the "appearing," the "revelation" of Jesus, and the resurrection of his people. The unscripturalness and evil consequences of this new system we have endeavoured to expose elsewhere.

These thoughts concerning the order of coming events we give without pretending to anything like infallibility; still we think there is good reason for concluding that they are generally in accordance with the sure word of prophecy.

The glorious prophecies of God's word may be appropriately compared to a grand range of mountains, which, beheld from a distance, appear all one mighty mass, and no one would think that among those heights there exist lovely valleys full of verdure, as all seems one regular ascent. Those who, before the first advent, contemplated Micah iv, 1—4, and Isa. ix, 6, 7, little thought that among those prophetic heights which rose so sublimely before them, there were valleys large enough to hold the present dispensation, with its long duration and vast privileges; but such is the case. And no one can say but that in the prophecies which reveal the closing of the present dispensation, the coming of the Lord, the various processes of judgment, and the establishment of the visible, universal, everlasting kingdom, there will be found among these mountain ranges of prophecy which we see tipped with glory, but which no one can yet fully explore, similar valleys; but *where* exactly they are found, and *how* the various acts of the great day of the Lord, its antecedents and subsequents, may be grouped and arranged, no one, we think, can say with absolute precision.

The one great *prophetical* point is, to ascertain the exact place among future events which the second coming of the Lord occupies. Is it before or after the Millennium? On this there ought to be neither doubt nor hesitation. Proof texts are abundant that the coming will be before the kingdom; but where is there a single scripture which asserts the contrary? We believe

also that the outline of events, as regards Antichrist coming before Christ, the first resurrection, the restoration of Israel, the blessedness of man, the renovation of creation, etc., are all clearly sketched.

Remember also that the great *practical* point is, "to be found in him;" abiding in him;" living like him for whom we look. The Lord Jesus is coming in his glory; this present world, with its glare and glitter, its noise and pretentiousness, must pass away. The enemies of Christ must perish; and his true-hearted friends shall share his government and glory. Then when these things have come to pass, where, oh where shall we be? Is Christ our refuge, his righteousness our robe, himself our beloved? Have we come to him, learned of him, lived upon him, and are we seeking grace to walk as he walked? If so, then to us belongs that great and sure promise, "Where I am there shall also my servant dwell. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

Alas for that Great City!

A TRAVELLER is standing upon the mountain of Moab, and looking down on one of the most singular and melancholy pieces of water on the face of the globe. As he gazes he exclaims—

"The wind blows chill across these gloomy waves,
Oh! how unlike the green and dancing main;
The surge is foul, as if it roll'd o'er graves."

The solution is—"Stranger, here lie the cities of the plain." The traveller recalls to mind the ancient loveliness of that now blighted region, and thinks of the teeming population that once crowded the space now so solitary and silent. He reads about their sin, and God's long-suffering,—the warnings they received, and their desperate resolve to sin on; until the Divine determination was taken to sweep them from that earth which they had so defiled. He meditates on that morning when just as Lot had gained the friendly shelter of Zoar, and while the sun was rising rejoicingly on the earth, the Lord rained from heaven fire and brimstone and destroyed them all. The scene presents itself vividly to his eye—

"God spake! down poured at once the sulphurous shower,
Down stooped, in flame, the heavens' red canopy;
Oh! for the arm of God in that fierce hour!
'Twas vain; nor help of God or man was nigh.

"They rush, they bound, they howl, the men of sin!
Still stooped the cloud, still burst the thicker blaze;
The earthquake heaved! Then sunk the hideous din,
Yon wave of darkness o'er their ashes strays."

Alas for those great cities!

Another traveller is drawing near to a region almost as drear as the site of Sodom. It is a more level country, and through it a sluggish river creeps, amidst ruins and delapidations of various forms. There great Babylon once stood. Now, no impregnable walls, or lofty towers, or sumptuous palaces,

or splendid temples, meet the view. Its most prominent object is a huge, unsightly, fire-scathed, storm-beaten ruin; the haunt of the savage beast and the deadly reptile. But let our traveller speak for himself. "In my second visit to Birs Nimrood, my party suddenly halted, having descried several dark objects moving along the summit of the hill, which they construed into dismounted Arabs on the look out. I took out my glass to examine, and soon distinguished that the causes of our alarm were two or three majestic lions, taking the air upon the heights of the pyramid." *

What a contrast between such a scene and that described in Dan. iv, when a proud king, vainly warned of God, walked on his palace heights exclaiming, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built!" Alas for that great city! and alas for any city or country over which hangs the dark thunder cloud of God's threatenings.

In the same region, though some miles distant from Babylon, stood her ancient rival Nineveh, called in God's word "an exceeding great city." Within that walled province how did the pride of man exalt itself! The conquests there planned, and the cruelties there practised, her now exhumed sculptures partially declare, and at the same time justify a holy God for the vengeance which he poured upon her. Through one of her gates came a prophet of God, and with a trumpet-toned voice proclaimed, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." The city of sin suddenly became the city of sorrow, and the threatened doom was averted for a while by Him who is long-suffering and rich in mercy. But soon the tide of evil returned with greater force; and then another prophet arose in a land which Nineveh had marked for its prey, and uttered the resolve of an offended God: "I will make thy grave; for thou art vile." (Nahum i, 14.) It was done. "Alas for that great city!" The water, the fire, and hosts of warriors were sent against it, and soon it was buried out of sight as a loathsome thing; yea, except its name and history in the sacred volume, it was buried out of mind. Infidels had just begun to express an opinion that its history was a myth, or else an exaggeration, when its grave was discovered, and a buried city came forth to testify to the truth of God's book.

Another prophet, the last of the glorious company, foretells that there is a city yet to be destroyed in the last days, whose fall will produce a far greater sensation than has been wrought by any that have yet been overthrown. This city is called Babylon the Great, its symbol is a harlot, "sitting upon many waters," or "riding on a ten horned beast full of names of blasphemy;" or "sitting on seven mountains." (See Rev. xvii, xviii.) Concerning this emporium of the world, when its wickedness will be most fully developed, it will be said by many "what city is like unto this great city!" We may well inquire as we read the Apocalypse, where its political associations and moral characteristics are so fully described, and where its doom and downfal are depicted in such awful language, "Where will the locality of this great city be!" Many will at once point to Rome; but Rome never has been, and never can be a mercantile city, such as this is positively affirmed to be. As Dr. Chalmers once said, "the description suits London far better than Rome." We do not think it is either, though both Rome and London *may in different* ways help to prepare for its development. We believe that

* *Christian Year*, 123, quoting from Sir R. K. Porter's travels.

Zech. v, 8—11, points out that development, and also mentions the locality where this city of man's greatness will be built, where it will flourish for a while, help to fill the earth with wickedness, and at last be "cast as a millstone into the waters, sink, and be found no more at all." "Alas for that great city!"

In connection with this overthrow we are told "the cities of the nations fell." Oh what an overthrow awaits earth's greatest glories! It must be so, the "loftiness of man must be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man laid low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." Another point also should be noticed concerning this great Babylon: that just before the stroke of avenging wrath falls upon it, it is described as having sunk into the most fearful depths of depravity. "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." (Rev. xviii, 2, 3.) Thus has it been with all cities and kingdoms which God has overthrown in ages past. Wealth has bred luxury, and luxury depravity. Would that those cities now standing in their pride and glory were ready to take warning!

In London, with all its growing magnificence, its untold miseries, and innumerable crimes, there is found what could not be found in Sodom, or Babylon, or Nineveh, many righteous ones who sigh and cry, who love and labour; and for the sake of such God has hitherto spared this exceeding great, and still more exceeding sinful city. Looking at Britain's metropolis, its population, its commerce, its influence on the world, its riches, its appliances for good or evil in so many ways, we may well say, "What city is like unto this great city!" But when we think of its festering depravity, the fearful contrast of classes, its hundreds of thousands who are living like the heathen, or even worse, with many other alarming facts, we may also add, "Alas for that great city!" And we should all remember how easy it will be for God to add, "In one hour so great riches have come to nought."

We began with viewing a traveller looking down on the site of ancient Sodom, let us close with contemplating One who travelled from the heights of heaven to the depths of sorrow, to measure and gauge our misery; and by his humiliation, services, sufferings, and victories, to remove the same by striking at the root of all, even sin; and who, having destroyed the works of the devil, will found a kingdom that cannot be moved, with a heavenly city for its metropolis.

But while we hope for this, let us now view him standing on a lovely height, overlooking a city most dearly loved by him, and with the shouts of its citizens ringing in his ears, *weeping* because it had rejected God's message of love sent by him. And next he goes into that city once more to testify, and then to die. Oh for his mind and heart, his tender pity, his devoted zeal, his spirit of self-sacrificing love! While we lament over the sins of the times, let us long and labour for the salvation of sinners.

It is not in our power to save a nation, or to change the condition of a

city, but we may lay anything, however great, before God; and patriotism is not worth much if it is not accompanied by prayer. If we are sincere in our prayers, we shall also seek out some lowly sphere in which we may bear our testimony, if by any means we may save some, and be God's channel of blessing to a few weary, desolate, and down-trodden ones in the city, town, or village where we dwell. There is work for all, and a sure blessing on every loving labourer.

Imputed Righteousness, and Faith Imputed for Righteousness. How they Agree.

THERE are some who object to its being said that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, on the ground that the expression "imputed righteousness" is unscriptural. It is nowhere, they say, found in Scripture. Are we then contending about *words*, or about the verities conveyed by words? We do not find in Scripture the words, "Trinity," nor "Incarnation," nor "Satisfaction," yet shall we on that account refuse to use these words? or say that they are unsuited to convey the truths expressed by them? We are told by the Apostle that we (i.e. believers) are "constituted righteous" before God "by means of the obedience" of another. If this statement is true, the obedience of Christ must be transferred to us, reckoned to us, or set down to our account. Is not this imputation? And this is the more evident, because, in the fifth of Romans the imputation of Christ's righteousness is spoken of as correlative to the imputation of Adam's first sin. Shall we deny the fact of the imputation of Adam's sin whereby we are "constituted sinners?" We must, if we deny the imputation of that righteousness whereby we are constituted righteous. How is it possible to hold the one and reject the other? Shall we then reject it? If we do, if we reject *imputation*, we incur the guilt of rejecting that which God has distinctly revealed as the ground of our condemnation on the one hand, and the ground of our justification on the other. By imputation we were ruined, and by imputation we are saved.

I have argued on the supposition that the expression "imputed righteousness" is not found in Scripture. Even *then*, the truth would be the same; for we are concerned not with words, but with things. In the fourth of Romans, however, we do find the very words, "impute righteousness:"—"David also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord IMPUTETH RIGHTEOUSNESS without works." The expression that occurs in the preceding and following verses, where faith is spoken of as being "imputed FOR righteousness," is not identical with this, and is to be distinguished from it.* We are taught in this chapter that to the believer his faith is "imputed or reckoned for (λογιζεται ΕΙΣ) righteousness." Now it would be impossible for faith to be thus imputed FOR righteousness, unless there were

* See remarks on this in "Occasional Papers," No. 1, p. 89.

an actually subsisting righteousness of which faith so imputed FOR righteousness is regarded as the representative. God, whose governmental holiness demands that his mercy should not be so exercised as to derogate from his righteousness, and who sanctions no fiction, could not recognise faith as having a value which *intrinsically* it has not, except something that had a real value existed, of which faith is regarded as the token; just as a bank note is looked upon as having the value of the gold which it is legally authorised to represent.

Faith is the instrumental means that connects us with the justifying merits of Christ. Under the expression, "justifying merits," I include his active and his passive righteousness, that is to say, his obedience and his suffering. When, therefore, the soul enters its plea in the Courts of God, and saith, "Lord I have believed, and therefore I have that righteousness which thy Courts acknowledge," the plea is recognised. It is a valid plea. But how? Is it because faith is *in itself* righteousness? No; but because it is imputed *for* righteousness, inasmuch as it doth connect us with, and is looked on as representing that real righteousness—that true gold which is found in the obedience unto death of Immanuel; *that* being the "righteousness" by means of which grace reigneth unto eternal life. (See Rom. v, 21.) Seeing, therefore, that faith is imputed to us for righteousness, and that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us *as* righteousness, God is able on this ground, without sanctioning any fiction, to impute to us righteousness without works.

We are sinners: that is no fiction. And we have believed: that is no fiction. Through faith we have become connected with no fictitious righteousness, but with a righteousness actually wrought out for us by our God and Saviour in the days of his flesh. And having that righteousness imputed to us, we stand before God, even now, in true, actual possession of righteousness bestowed on us freely by God—as the result of which bestowment we are to reign in life: "for if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive the superabounding (τὴν περισσείαν) of grace and of THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, shall reign in life through one, Jesus Christ."

Whilst, therefore, the ascription to us of the righteousness thus wrought out for us by Immanuel is the sole ground of our justification, we must remember that the riches of God's grace towards us through Christ extend beyond our justification. He who, in fulfilment of the will of God, voluntarily wrought out for us that righteousness which enables us, even now, to appear before God as those who have all its value attributed to us, has thereby brought us into the possession of that, the value of which is infinite, because it is the righteousness of One whose merits are infinite. Who can search into the depths of the merits of Immanuel? Can any of us say what is the estimate formed thereof by Him who dwelleth in the heavens? His merits are as his person, past finding out; and therefore, the value of the righteousness imputed to us for our justification is *infinite*. Its value is not exhausted in our justification. It is eternal; it abides for ever: and because of it the redeemed receive every favour and every blessing that reaches them, whether in time or in eternity. In the ages of eternity our great Redeemer shall see the fruits of the travail of his soul in seeing his people blessed

according to the value of that righteousness which he has provided for them, and whose value can only be estimated by the infinitude of his merits. His people, therefore, shall for ever stand under, and be blessed according to, the value of a righteousness which is not their own righteousness, but the righteousness of Another imputed to them. The love, the life, the glory, which they receive in union with and in fellowship with Christ, are all bestowments that come to them because of God's eternal purpose to bless them according to the value of the merits of him who is "the Lord their righteousness." The final change which shall bring us into the heavenly likeness of our risen Lord, and give us practical meetness for heaven, is not the cause, but *the result and consequence* of the possession of that righteousness, which, in all the infinitude of its value is reckoned to us now, and will equally be reckoned to us then, and for ever. In glory the redeemed will recognise the imputation of the righteousness of Immanuel as the sole ground of all their blessings. All the blessings they will receive they will recognise as blessings prepared for them by God, as the result of his eternal purpose to bless them according to the value of the righteousness by which they were justified; and that value is, as I have already said, to be determined by the value of the merits of the person who wrought out that righteousness: and those merits are infinite. How then have we to cleave to that great and all-blessed truth which is taught in the word IMPUTATION! It is the great distinctive doctrine of the gospel of the grace of God—the very key-stone of the arch of blessing. Destroy it, and you destroy every hope. On it, as on a foundation, God has made to rest the whole economy of grace throughout the whole detail of its ministration and development. There is not a blessing which God ever has dispensed, or ever will dispense to the redeemed, as the redeemed, in time or in eternity, that is not the result of IMPUTATION. However excellent and precious may be that which he *imparteth* to his people in the way of inherent grace, or gift, yet all such bestowments are simply the consequences of imputation. Whatever God thus *imparteth*, is because of that which he *hath imputed*. It is the knowledge of this that enables us to say truly, "*Of* him, and *through* him, and *unto* him are all things; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

From heights of bliss the Saviour sped,
On wings of everlasting love,
And groan'd, and sigh'd, and wept, and bled,
The mountains of our guilt to move.

How glorious was the work he wrought,
While dwelling on this earthly globe;
When each good deed, and each pure thought,
Conspir'd to weave our spotless robe.

Dress'd in this robe, wash'd in this blood,
And ransom'd from the power of hell,
We now have free access to God,
And justice likes the payment well.

Thus Jesus wrought our righteousness,
Our guilt sustained, our sorrows bore;
Secur'd our everlasting peace,
And triumph'd o'er the serpent's power.

And now in heav'n he lives to plead,
Before his holy Father's throne,
What he has suffer'd in our stead,
And sends us gifts and graces down.

And soon will this dear Saviour come,
In majesty and glory dress't,
And take his ransom'd children home,
To seats of *everlasting rest*.

SWAIN.

* From No. 4, "Occasional Papers," by B. W. Newton, just published. For the contents of this important number, see advertisement on wrapper.